The Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation

A Basic Buddhist Mindfulness Exercise

The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw

Agga Mahā Paṇḍita

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स्मृति - प्रस्थान

INTRODUCTION

Satipaṭṭhāna or the practice of mindfulness was recommended by the Buddha for all who seek to grow spiritually and eventually attain the realization of enlightenment. Buddhism itself is essentially a practical path, a system of physical and psychological techniques designed to bring about this realization. The method here described in this little book by the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw, Bhadanta Sobhana Mahāthera, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, the spiritual head of Sāsana Yeikthā Meditation Centre, Rangoon, is the foundation of all Buddhist meditation practice. This form of meditation may be practised with benefit by all, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, because its aim is simply to expand the practiser's consciousness and bring him face to face with his mind.

Buddhist psychology or **Abhidhamma** teaches that you are not your mind. You already know that you are not your body. But you do not yet know that you are not your mind, because normally you identify yourself with each thought, feeling, impulse, emotion or sensation that comes into your mind. Each takes you on a little trip. Through the practice of mindfulness, you come to observe the rise and fall, the appearance and disappearance of these various thoughts and feelings, and gradually develop a sense of distance and detachment from them. Then you will no longer become caught up by your hangups. This leads to a deep inner peaceful calm. Through further practice, you will develop insight and wisdom, which is the power of consciousness to pierce through the veils of illusion and ignorance to the reality that lies beyond.

At the instance of the former Prime Minister of the Union of Burma and of the President of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Association of Rangoon, the Venerable Mahāsī Sayadaw came down from Shwebo to Rangoon on the 10th November 1949. The Meditation Centre at the Thāthana Yeikthā, Hermitage road, Rangoon, was formally opened on the 4th December 1949 when the Mahāsī Sayadaw began to give to twenty-five devotees a methodical training in the right system of **Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā** (Insight Meditation through Mindfulness).

From the first day of the opening of the Centre, a discourse on the exposition of the Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā, its purpose, the method of practice, the benefits derived therefrom, etc., has been given daily to each batch of devotees arriving at the Centre almost every day to undertake the intensive course of training. The discourse lasts normally for one hour and thirty minutes, and the task of talking almost daily in this manner had inevitably caused a strain. Fortunately the Buddha Sāsana-nuggaha Association came forward to relieve the situation with an offer of charity or a tape recorder machine with which the discourse given on the 27th July 1951 to a group of fifteen devotees undertaking the training was taken on tape. Thereafter this tape recorded discourse has been in constant use daily, preceded by a few preliminary remarks spoken by the Mahāsī Sayadaw in person.

Then owing to the great demand of many branch Meditation Centres of the Mahāsī Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā as well as of the public, this discourse was published in book form in 1954. This book has now run to several editions. As there was also a keen interest and eager demand among many devotees of other nationalities who are unacquainted with Burmese, the discourse was translated into English by the late U Pe Thin, a lay disciple and practised Mahāsī yogī, who had acted as interpreter to British Rear Admiral Shattock who went through a course of Vipassanā meditation practice at the Centre in its early days.

Explanatory Note on certain technical Buddhist terms

Dhamma (Sanskrit **Dharma**) may mean (1) the doctrine of the Buddha, (2) the Truth, (3) the Ultimate Reality, (4) the correct conduct of life, (5) the ultimate psychic events which combine to form the content of consciousness.

Ñāṇa may mean Gnosis or higher spiritual knowledge and illumination, or could signify an individual cognition of this type.

Samādhi may mean (1) ordinary attention, (2) concentration of mind so it becomes one-pointed, (3) ecstatic trance, (4) a general name for all the various practices of mindfulness and meditation.

The aim of Buddhist psychology (known as **Abhidhamma**) is to show that the mind is in reality an impersonal process composed of a large number of elementary psychic events called **dhammas.**

Through mindful observation one comes to realize that there is no permanent abiding entity called a self or ego in the **Khandhās**(Sanskrit **Skandhas)** (the five aggregates of human existence). The result of this realization is a detachment from the sensations, feelings, thoughts, ideas, impulses, etc, which are continually arising in the mind. The insight into this and full realization of it, is known as **Paññā** (Sanskrit **Prajna**) or wisdom.

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Namo Buddhassa

Honour to the Fully Enlightened One

On coming across the Teachings (**sasana**) of Lord Buddha it is most important for every one to cultivate in oneself the virtues of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom (**sila, samadhi,** and **panna**). One should, undoubtedly, possess these three virtues.

Morality (**sila**) is the observance, by lay-people, of five precepts as a minimum measure. For monks it is the discipline of the Rules of Conduct for Monks (**patimokkha sila**). Any one who is well-disciplined in Morality would be reborn in the happy existence of human beings or devas. But this ordinary form of Ordinary Morality (**lokiya sila**) would not be a safeguard against the relapse into the lower states of miserable existence, such as hell, or animals or Hungry Ghosts (**petas**). It is, therefore, desirable to cultivate the higher form of Supramundane Morality (**lokuttara sila**) as well. This is Path and Fruition Morality (**magga** and **phala sila**). When one has fully acquired the virtue of this Morality he is saved from the relapse into the lower states, and he will always lead a happy life by being reborn as human beings or Angels (devas). Everyone should, therefore, make it a point of his duty to work for the Supramundane Morality. There is every hope of success for anyone who works sincerely and in real earnest. It would indeed be a pity if anyone were to fail to take advantage of this fine chance of being endowed with the higher qualities, for he would undoubtedly be a victim sooner or later of his own bad Karma which would pull him down to lower states of miserable existence of hell, or animals or petas, where the span of life lasts for many hundreds, thousands or millions of million years. It is therefore emphasized here that this coming across the Teachings of Lord Buddha is the very opportunity for working for the Path and Fruition Morality.

It is not feasible to work for the Morality alone. It is also necessary to practice Concentration (**samadhi**). Concentration is the fixed or tranquil state of mind. The ordinary or undisciplined mind is in the habit of wandering to other places; it cannot be kept under control; it follows any idea, thought or imagination, etc. In order to

prevent its wandering, the mind should be made to attend repeatedly to a selected object of Concentration. On gaining practice the mind gradually loosens its traits and remains fixed on the object to which it is directed. This is Concentration. There are two forms of Concentration, viz, Ordinary Concentration and Supramundane Concentration. Of these two, the practice in the Meditational Development of Peaceful Calm (**samatha bhavana**) viz: Mindful Breathing, Meditation on Friendliness, Meditational Devices (**anapana, metta, kasina**) will enable the development of the states of Ordinary Absorption (**lokiya jhana**) such as four Form Absorptions (**rupa-jhanas**) and four Formlessness Absorptions (**arupa-jhanas**), by virtue of which one would be reborn in the plane of Brahma. The life span of Brahma is very long and lasts for one world cycle, two, four, eight up to a limit of eighty-four thousands of world-cycles as the case may be. But at the end of the lifespan a Brahma will die and be reborn as human being or angel. If he leads a virtuous life all the time he may lead a happy life in higher existence. But as he is not free from Defilements (**kilesas**) he may commit demeritorious deeds on many occasions. He will then be a victim of his bad Karma and will be reborn in hell or other lower states of miserable existence. This Ordinary Absorption also is not a definite security. It is desirable to work for the Supramundane Concentration, which is nothing but Path and Fruition Concentration (**magga samadhi** and **phala samadhi**). To possess this Concentration is is essential to cultivate Wisdom.

There are two forms of Wisdom, namely, Mundane and Supramundane. Today the knowledge of literature, art, science or worldly affairs is usually regarded as a kind of Wisdom. But this form of Wisdom has nothing to do with any kind of Meditational Development (**bhavana**). Nor can it be regarded as of real merit because many weapons of destruction are invented through these knowledges, which are always under the influence of greed, hatred and other evil motives. The real spirit of that which is Ordinary Wisdom (**lokiya panna**) on the other hand has only merits and no demerits of any kind. The knowledge in welfare organizations and relief works without causing any harm: learning to acquire the

knowledge of the true meaning or sense of the scriptures, and the three classes of knowledge in Insight Meditation (**vipassana bhavana**), such as, Wisdom Which Consists of Learning (**suta-maya-panna**)–knowledge based on learning; Wisdom Which Consists of Reflective Thinking (**cinta- maya-panna**)–knowledge based on thinking; and Wisdom Which Consists of Meditational Development (**bhavana-maya- panna**)–knowledge based on mental development, are Ordinary Wisdom (**lokiya panna**). The virtue of possessing Ordinary Wisdom would lead to a happy life in higher states of existence, but it cannot prevent the risk of being reborn in hell or other lower states of miserable existence. Only the development of Supramundane Wisdom can decidedly remove this risk.

The Supramundane Wisdom is Path and Fruition. To develop this Wisdom it is necessary to carry on the practice of Meditational Development of Insight (**vipassana bhavana**) out of the three forms of discipline in cultivating Morality, Concentration and Wisdom. When the virtue of Wisdom is duly developed, the necessary qualities of Morality and Concentration are also acquired.

The method of developing this Wisdom is to observe matter and mind which are the two sole elements existing in a body with a view to know them in their true form. At present times experiments in the analytical observation of matter are usually carried out in laboratories with the aid of various kinds of instruments; yet these methods cannot deal with mindstuff. The method of Lord Buddha does not, however, require any kind of instruments or outside aid. It can successfully deal with both matter and mind. It makes use of one's own mind for analytical purpose by fixing bare attention on the activities of matter and mind as they occur in the body. By continually repeating this form of exercise the necessary Concentration can be gained and when the Concentration is keen enough, the ceaseless course of arising and passing away of matter and mind will be vividly perceptible.

The body consists solely of the two distinct groups of matter and mind. The solid substance of body as it is now found belongs to the former group of matter. According to the usual enumeration in the

terms of Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Eye, Form (**pathavi, apo, tejo, vavo, cakkhu, rupa**), there are altogether twenty-eight kinds in this group but in short it may be noted that the body is a mass of matter. For instance it is just like a doll made of clay or wheat which is nothing but a collection of clay dust or wheat powder. Matter changes its form under physical conditions of heat, cold, etc., and because of this fact of changeableness under contrary physical conditions it is called Form (**rupa**). It does not possess any faculty of knowing an object.

In the Abhidhamma, the proper name for the third division of the Buddhist scriptures, dealing with the metaphysical and psychological, the elements of mind and matter are classified differently as Things Which Possess Consciousness and Things Which Lack Consciousness (**sarammana dhamma** and **anarammana dhamma**) respectively. The element of mind has an object, or holds an object, or knows an object while that of matter does not have an object, nor holds an object, nor knows an object. It will thus be seen that the Abhidhamma has directly stated that there is no faculty of knowing an object in the element of matter. A Yogi also perceives in like manner, that is, "material element has no faculty of knowing." Logs and pillars, bricks and stones and lumps of earth are a mass of matter; they do not possess any faculty of knowing. It is the same case with material elements consisting in a living body; they have no faculty of knowing. The material elements in a dead body are like those of a living body; they are without the faculty of knowing. But people have a general idea that material elements of a living body possess the faculty of knowing an object irrespective of the fact whether it is in a dead or a living body.

Then what is that which knows the objects now? It is the element of mind which comes into being depending on matter. It is called Mind (**nama**) because it inclines to an object. Mind is also spoken of as "thought" or "consciousness." Mind arises depending on matter as will be described hereafter. Depending on eye, eye- consciousness (seeing) arises; depending on ear, ear-consciousness (hearing) arises; depending on nose, nose- consciousness (smelling) arises; depending on tongue, tongue-consciousness (taste) arises; depending on body,

body-consciousness (sense of touch) arises. There are many kinds, either good or bad, of the sense of touch. While it has a wide field of action by running throughout the whole length of body, inside and outside, the sense of sight, hearing, smell, or taste can on the other hand come into being respectively in its own particular sphere, such as eye, ear, nose, and tongue, which occupies a very small and limited space of the body. These senses of touch, sight, etc. are nothing but the elements of mind. Also there comes into being the mind-consciousness (i.e., thoughts, ideas, imaginations, etc.) depending on mind-base. All of these are elements of mind. Mind as a rule knows an object while matter does not know.

People generally believe that, in the case of seeing, it is the eye which actually sees. They think that seeing and eye are one and the same thing. They also think, "Seeing is I: I see things: eye and seeing and I are one and the same person." In actual fact this is not so. Eye is one thing and seeing is another and there is no separate entity such as "I" or "Ego." There is only the fact of "seeing" coming into being depending on eye.

To quote an example, it is like the case of a person who sits in a house. House and person are two separate things: House is not the person nor is person the house. Similarly it is so at the time of seeing. Eye and seeing are two separate things: eye is not seeing nor is seeing eye.

To quote another example, it is just like the case of a person in a room who sees many things when he opens the window and looks through it. If it be asked, "Who is it that sees? Is it window or person that actuallly sees?" The answer is, "The window has no ability to see; it is only the person who sees." If it be asked again, "Will the person be able to see things on the outside without the window?" then the answer will be, "It will not be possible to see things through the walling without the window; one can only see through the

window." Similarly, in the case of seeing there are two separate things of eye and seeing: eye is not seeing nor is seeing the eye. Yet there cannot be an act of seeing without the eye. In fact seeing comes into being depending on eye. It is now evident that in the body there are only two distinctive elements of matter (eye) and mind (seeing) at every moment of seeing. In addition there is also a third element of matter (visual object). At times the visual object is noticeable outside the body. If the last one is added there will be three elements, two of which (eye and visual object) are material and the third of which (seeing) is mental. Eye and visual object being material elements do not possess any ability of knowing an object, while seeing being a mental element can know the visual object and what it looks like. Now it is clear that there exist only two separate elements of matter and mind at the moment, and the arising of this pair of two separate elements is known as "seeing."

People who are without the training and knowledge of the Meditational Development of Insight (**vipassana bhavana**) hold the view that seeing belongs to or is "self, or ego, or living entity, or person." They believe that "Seeing is I; or I am seeing; or I am knowing." This kind of view or belief is called the Erroneous View That There is a Self (**sakkaya-ditthi**). **Sakkaya** means the group of matter (**rupa**) and mind (**nama**) as they exist distinctively. **Ditthi** means to hold a wrong view of belief. The compound word of **Sakkaya-ditthi** means to hold a wrong view or belief on the dual set of Matter and Mind which are in real existence. For more clarity it will be explained further as to the manner of holding the wrong view or belief. At the moment of seeing, the things that are in actual existence are the eye and visual object of material group, and the seeing which belongs to mental group. These two kinds are in actual existence. Yet people hold the view that this group of elements is "self, or ego, or living entity." They consider that "seeing is I; or what is seen is I; or I see my own body." Thus this mistaken view is taken on the simple act of seeing as "self," which is **Sakkaya-ditthi**.

As long as one is not free from **Sakkaya-ditthi** one cannot expect to escape from the risk of falling into miserable existence of hell, or animals, or petas. Though he may be leading a happy life in the

human or deva world by virtue of his merits, yet he is liable to fall back into the state of miserable life at any time when his demerits operate. For this reason Lord Buddha pointed out that it was essential to work for the total removal of **Sakkaya-ditthi** as follows:

Sakkya ditthippahanaya sato bhikkhu paribbaje.

This says: Though it is the wish of everyone to avoid old age, disease and death, yet no one can help it but must inevitably submit to them one day. After death, rebirth follows. Rebirth in any state of existence does not depend on one's own wish. It is not possible to avoid rebirth in the realm of hell, or animals, or petas by merely wishing for an escape. Rebirth takes place in any state of existence as the circumstances of one's own deeds provide, and there is no choice at all. For these reasons, the Wheel of Rebirth (**samsara**) is very dreadful. Every effort should therefore be made to acquaint oneself with the miserable conditions of Samsara and then to work for an escape from this incessant cycle, and for the attainment of Nirvana. If an escape from Samsara as a whole is not possible for the present, an attempt should be made for an escape at least from the round of rebirth in the realm of hell, or animals, or petas. In this case it is necessary to work for the total removal from oneself of the erroneous view that there is a self, which is the root-cause of rebirth in the miserable states. This erroneous view can only be destroyed completely by the Holy Path and its Fruition (**ariya magga** and **phala**), three virtues of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom. It is, therefore, imperative to work for the development of these virtues. How to work? That is, **Sato**: by means of noting or observing; **Paribbaje**: must go out from the jurisdiction of Defilement (**kilesa**). One should practice by constantly noting or observing every act of seeing, hearing, etc., which are the constituent physical and mental processes of the body, till one is freed from **Sakkaya-ditthi**.

For these reasons advice is always given here to take up the practice of Vipassana Meditation. Now Yogis have come here for the purpose of practicing Vipassana Meditation, who may be able to complete the course of training and attain the Holy Path in a short time. **Sakkya-ditthi** will then be totally removed and security against the danger of rebirth in the realm of hell, or animals, or petas will be finally gained.

In this respect the exercise is simply to note or observe the existing elements in every act of seeing. It should be noted as "seeing, seeing," on every act of seeing. (By the terms of note or observe or contemplate it means the act of keeping the mind fixedly on the object with a view to knowing clearly.) Because of this fact of keeping the mind fixedly by noting as "seeing, seeing," at times a visual object is noticed, at times consciousness of seeing is noticed, or at times it is noticed as eye-base or as a place from which it sees. It will serve the purpose if one can notice distinctly any one of the three. If not, basing on this act of seeing there will arise the erroneous view of self which will view it in the form of a person or belonging to a person and in the sense of Permanence, Happiness and Selfhood (**nicca, sukha** and **atta**), which will arouse attachment and craving. The Defilements will in turn prompt deeds, and the deeds will bring forth rebirth of new existence. Thus the process of dependent origination operates and the vicious circle of Samsara revolves incessantly. In order to prevent this from the source of seeing, it is necessary to note as "seeing, seeing" on every occasion of seeing.

Similarly, in the case of hearing, there are only two distinct elements of matter and mind. The sense of hearing arises depending on ear. While ear and sound are two elements of matter, the sense of hearing is an element of mind. In order to know clearly any one of these two kinds of matter and mind it should be noted as "hearing, hearing" on every occasion of hearing. So also it should be noted as "smelling, smelling" on every occasion of smelling, and as "knowing, knowing" on every occasion of knowing the taste.

Similarly, it should be noted in the case of knowing or feeling the sensation of touch in the body. There is a kind of material element known as Nerve Tissue (**kaya-pasada**) throughout the body which receives every impression of touch. Every kind of touch, either agreeable or disagreeable, usually comes in collision with Nerve Tissue and there arises a Touch Consciousness (**kaya-vinnana**) which feels or knows the touch on each occasion. It will now be seen that at every time of touching there are two elements of matter, viz, sense-organ and impression of touch, and one element of mind, viz,

knowing of touch. In order to know these things distinctly at every time of touch the practice of noting as "touching, touching" has to be carried out. This merely refers to the common form of sensation of touch. There are special forms which accompany painful or disagreeable sensations, such as, to feel stiff or tired in the body or limbs, to feel hot, to feel pain, to feel numb, to feel ache, etc. Because Feeling (**vedana**) predominates in these cases, it should be noted as "feeling hot, feeling tired, painful, etc." as the case may be.

It may also be mentioned that there occur many sensations of touch in hands and legs, etc., on each occasion of bending, stretching, or moving. Because of mind wanting to move, stretch or bend, the material activities of moving, stretching, or bending, etc., occur in series. (It may not be possible to notice these incidents for the present. They can only be noticed after some time on gaining practice. It is mentioned here for the sake of Knowledge.) All activities in movements and in changing, etc., are done by these minds. When the mind wills to bend, there arises a series of inward movements of hand or leg; when the mind wills to stretch or move, there arises a series of outward movements or movements to and fro respectively. They disappear or are lost soon after they occur and at the very point of occurrence. (One will notice these incidents later on.)

In every case of bending, stretching or other activities, there arises in the foremost a series of intending or willing minds, and on account of which there occur in the hands and legs a series of material activities, such as stiffening (or being hard), bending, stretching, or moving to and fro. These activities come up against other material elements, nerve tissue, and on every occasion of collision between material activities and sensitive qualities, there arises Touch Consciousness, which feels or knows the sensation of touch. It is, therefore, clear that material activities are the predominating factors in these cases. It is necessary to notice these predominating factors. If not, there will surely arise the wrong view of holding these activities in the sense of "I or I am bending, or I am stretching, or My hands, or My legs." This practice of noting as "bending, stretching, moving" is being carried out for the purpose of removing such a wrong view.

As regards "thoughts, imaginations, etc." it may be mentioned that depending on mind-base there arise a series of mental activities, such as thinking, imagining, etc., or to speak in a general sense, a series of mental activities arise depending on this body. In reality each case is a composition of matter and mind; mind-base or body is matter, while thinking, imagining, etc. are mind. In order to be able to notice matter and mind clearly, it should be noted as "thinking, imaginging, etc." in each case.

After having carried out the practice in the manner indicated above for a time, there may be an improvement in Concentration. One will notice that the mind no longer wanders about but remains fixedly on the object to which it is directed. At the same time the power of noticing has considerably developed. On every occasion of noting he notices only two processes of matter and mind. A dual set of object and mind, which makes note of the object, is thus coming into existence.

Again on proceeding further with the practice of contemplation for some time, one notices that nothing remains permanent but everything is in a state of flux. New things arise each time: each of them is noted every time as it arises; it then vanishes. Immediately another arises, which is again noted and which then vanishes. Thus the process of arising and vanishing goes on, which clearly shows that nothing is permanent. One is therefore convinced that "things are not permanent" because it is noticed that they arise and vanish at every time of noting. This is Insight into impermanency **(aniccanupassana-nana)**.

Then one is also convinced that arising and vanishing are not desirable. This is Insight into Suffering **(dukkhanupassana-nana)**. Besides, one usually experiences many painful sensations in the body, such as tiredness, feeling hot, painful, aching, and at the time of noting these sensations he generally feels that this body is a collection of sufferings. This is also Insight into Suffering.

Then at every time of noting it is found that elements of matter and mind occur according to their respective nature and conditioning, and not according to one's wish. One is therefore

convinced that they are elements: they are not governable: they are not person or living entity. This is Insight into the Absence of a Self (**anattanupassana-nana**).

On having fully acquired these knowledges of Impermanence, Suffering, Absence of Self (**anicca, dukkha, anatta**), the maturity of Spiritual Knowledge of the Path and Spiritual Knowledge of its Fruition (**magga nana** and **phala nana**) takes place and realization of Nirvana is won. By winning the realization of Nirvana in the first stage, one is freed from the round of rebirth in the unhappy life of lower existence. Everyone should, therefore, endeavor to reach the first stage as a minimum measure.

It has already been explained that the actual method of practice in Vipassana Meditation is to note or to observe or to contemplate the successive occurrences of seeing, hearing, etc., at six points or sense doors. However, it will not be possible for a beginner to follow up all successive incidents as they occur because his Mindfulness, Concentration and Spiritual Knowledge (**sati, samadhi** and **nana**) are still very weak. The incidents of seeing, hearing, etc. occur very swiftly. Seeing seems to occur at the time of hearing; hearing seems to occur at the time of seeing; it seems that both seeing and hearing occur simultaneously. It seems that three or four incidents of seeing, hearing, thinking, and imagining usually occur simultaneously. It is not possible to distinguish which occurs first and which follows next because they occur so swiftly. In actual fact, seeing does not occur at the time of hearing nor does hearing occur at the time of seeing. Such incidents can occur one only at a time. A Yogi who has just begun the practice and who has not sufficiently developed Mindfulness, Concentration and Spiritual Knowledge will not, however, be in a position to observe all these incidents singly as they occur in serial order. A beginner need not therefore follow up many things, but should instead start with a few things. Seeing or hearing occurs only when due attention is given. If one does not pay heed to any sight or sound, one may pass the time mostly without any occasion of seeing or hearing. Smelling occurs rarely. Experience of taste occurs only at the time of eating. In the cases of seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting, the Yogi can note them when they occur.

However, body impressions are ever present: they usually exist quite distinctly all the time. During the time that one is sitting, the body impressions of stiffness or the sensation of hardness in this position are distinctly felt. Attention should therefore be fixed on the sitting posture and a note made as "sitting, sitting, sitting."

Sitting is an erect posture of body consisting of a series of physical activities which are induced by the consciousness consisting of a series of mental activities. It is just like the case of an inflated rubber ball which maintains its round shape through the resistance of the air inside it: so is the posture of sitting, in which the body is kept in an erect posture through the continuous process of physical activities. A good deal of energy will be required to pull up and keep in an erect position such a heavy load as this body. People generally assume that the body is lifted and kept in the position by means of sinews. This assumption is correct in a sense because sinews, blood, flesh, bones are nothing but material elements. The element of stiffening which keeps the body in an erect posture belongs to the material group and arises in the sinews, flesh, blood, etc. throughout the body like the air in a rubber ball. The element of stiffening is **vayo-dhatu**, the air element. The body is kept in the erect position by the presence of the Air Element in the form of stiffening, which is continually coming into existence. At the time of heavy drowsiness one may drop flat, because the supply of new materials in the form of stiffening is cut off. The state of mind in heavy drowsiness or sleep is Unconsciousness (**bhavanga**). During the course of Unconsciousness mental activities are absent, and for this reason the body lies flat during sleep or heavy drowsiness. During waking hours strong and active mental activities are continually arising, and because of these there arises a series of Air Elements in the form of stiffening. In order to know these facts it is essential to note attentively as "sitting, sitting, sitting." This does not necessarily mean that the body impressions of stiffening should be particularly searched and noted. Attention need only be fixed on the whole form of sitting posture, that is, the lower portion in a bending circular form and the upper portion in an erect posture.

It will be found that the exercise of observing a single object of

sitting posture is too easy and does not require much effort. In the circumstances Vigor (viriya) is less and Concentration is in excess, and one would generally feel lazy to carry on the noting as "sitting, sitting, sitting," repeatedly for a considerable time. Laziness generally occurs when there is excess of Concentration and less Vigor. It is nothing but a state of Torpor (thina-midha). More Vigor should be developed, and for this purpose the number of objects for noting should be increased. After noting as "sitting," the attention should be directed to a spot in the body where the sense of touch is felt and a note made as "touching." Any spot in the leg or hand or hip where a sense of touch is distinctly felt will serve the purpose.

For example, after noting the sitting posture of the body as "sitting," the spot where the sense of touch is felt should be noted as "touching." The noting should thus be repeated on these two objects of sitting posture and the place of touching alternately, as "sitting, touching; sitting, touching; sitting, touching."

The terms noting or observing or contemplating are used here to indicate the fixing of attention on an object. The exercise is simply to note or observe or contemplate as "sitting, touching." Those who already have experience in the practice of meditation may perhaps find this exercise easy to begin with, but those without any previous experience may find it rather difficult to begin with.

The more simplified and easy form of exercise for a beginner is this: At every time of breathing there occur movements in the form of rising and falling of one's abdomen. A beginner should start with this exercise of noting or observing these movements. It is easy to observe these movements because they are coarse and prominent and are more suitable for a beginner. As in schools where simple lessons are easy to learn so is the case in the practice of Vipassana Meditation. A beginner will find it easier to develop Concentration and Spiritual Knowledge with a simple and easy exercise.

Again, the purpose of the Vipassana Meditation is to begin the exercise by contemplating prominent factors in the body. Of the two factors of mind and matter, the mental element is subtle and less prominent while the material element is coarse and more prominent.

Therefore the usual procedure for one who practices the Vipassana insight meditation (**vipassana-yanika**) is to begin the exercise by contemplating the material elements at the outset. As regards material elements it may be mentioned here that Etheric Matter (**upada-rupa**) is subtle and less prominent while Dense Physical Matter (**maha-buta**), the four primary physical elements of Earth, Water, Fire and Air are coarse and more prominent and should therefore have the priority of being placed first in the order of objects for contemplation. In the case of rising and falling the outstanding factor is the Air Element. The process of stiffening and the movements of abdomen noticed during the contemplation are nothing but the functions of this element. Thus it will be seen that the Air Element is perceptible at the beginning. According to the instructions of Satipatthana Sutra, the discourse of the Buddha, dealing with the practice of mindfulness, one should be mindful of the activities of walking while walking, of those of standing, sitting, and lying down while standing, sitting, and lying down, respectively. One should also be mindful of other bodily activities as each of them occurs. In this connection it is stated in the commentaries that one should be mindful primarily of the Air Element in preference to the other three. As a matter of fact, all four elements of Dense Physical Matter are dominant in every action of the body, and it is essential to perceive any one of these. At the time of sitting, either of the two movements of rising and falling occurs conspicuously at every time of breathing, and a beginning should be made by noting one of these movements.

Some fundamental features in the system of Vipassana Meditation have been explained for general information. The general outline of basic exercises will now be discussed.

When contemplating rising and falling, the disciple should keep his mind on the abdomen. He will then come to know the upward movement (expansion) of the abdomen on inbreathing, and a downward movement (contraction) on outbreathing. A mental note should be made as "rising" for upward movement, and "falling" for downward movement. If these movements are not clearly noticed by merely fixing the mind, one or both hands should be placed on the

abdomen. The disciple should not try to change the manner of his natural breathing: he should neither attempt slow breathing by the retention of his breath, nor quick breathing nor deep breathing. If he does change the natural flow of his breathing he will soon tire himself. He must therefore keep to the natural breathing, and proceed with the contemplation of rising and falling.

On the occurring of upward movement, a mental note calling it as "rising" should be made, and on the downward movement, a mental note calling it as "falling" should be made. The calling of these terms or names should not be repeated by mouth. In Vipassana Meditation it is more important to know the actual state of object than to know it by the term or name. It is therefore necessary for the disciple to make every effort to be mindful of the movement of rising from the beginning till the end and that of falling from the start to the finish, as if these movements are actually seen by the eyes. As soon as rising occurs, there should be the knowing mind close to the movement. As in the case of a stone hitting the wall, the movement of rising as it occurs and the mind knowing it must come together on every occasion. Similarly the movement of falling as it occurs and the mind knowing it must come together on every occasion.

When there is no object of special outstanding nature, the disciple should carry on the exercise of noting these two movements as "rising, falling; rising, falling; rising, falling." While thus being occupied with this exercise, there may be occasions when the mind wanders about. When the Concentration is weak it is very difficult to control the mind. Though it is directed to the movements of rising and falling the mind will not stay with them but will wander to other places. This wandering mind should not be let alone: it should be noted as "wandering, wandering" as soon as it goes out. On noting repeatedly once or twice when the mind stops wandering, then the exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be continued. When it is found again that the mind has reached a place it should be noted as "reaching, reaching." Then the exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to as soon as these movements are clear. On meeting with a person in the imagination it should be noted as "meeting, meeting," and after which the usual exercise should be

reverted to. Some time the fact that it is a mere imagination is found out at the time of speaking with an imaginary person, and it should be noted as "speaking, speaking." The real purpose is to note every mental activity as it occurs. For instance, it should be noted as "thinking, thinking" at the moment of thinking, and as "reflecting, planning, knowing, attending, rejoicing, feeling lazy, feeling happy, disgusting, etc." as the case may be on the occurrence of each activity. The contemplation of mental activities and noticing them as they occur is called **Cittanupassana.**

Because they have no practical knowledge in Vipassana Meditation people are generally not in a position to know the real state of the mind. This naturally leads them to the wrong view of holding mind as Person, self or living entity. They usually believe that "Imagination is I: I am imagining: I am thinking: I am planning: I am knowing, and so forth." They consider that there exists a living entity or self which grows up from childhood to the age of manhood. In reality there does not exist a living entity, but there does exist a continuous process of elements of mind which occurs singly at a time and in succession. The practice of contemplation is therefore being carried out with a view to find out the actual fact.

As regards mind and the manner of its arising, Buddha stated in The Dhammapada the following:

Duran-gamam Eka-caram, A-sariram Guha-sayam.
Ye Cittam Samyamessanti, Mokkhanti Mara-bandhana.

Duran-gaman—Used to go to far-off objects.

Mind usually wanders far and wide. While the Yogi is trying to carry on with the practice of contemplation in his meditation cell he often finds out that his mind usually wanders to many far-off places, towns, etc. He also finds that the mind can wander to any far-off places which have been known previously at the very moment of thinking or imagining. This fact should be found out with the help of contemplation.

Eka-caram—Usually occurs singly.

Mind usually occurs singly and one after another in succession. Those, who do not perceive this fact, believe that one mind exists in

the course of life or existence. They do not know that new minds (thought forms) are always arising at every moment. They think that seeing, hearing, etc. of the past and those of the present belong to one and the same mind, and that three or four acts of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing usually occur simultaneously. These are wrong views. In actual fact, a single new mind arises at every moment. This can be perceived on gaining considerable practice. The cases of imagination and planning are clearly perceptible. Imagination vanishes as soon as it is noted as "imagining, imagining," and planning also vanishes as soon as it is noted as "planning, planning." These instances of arising, noting, and vanishing appear like a string of beads. The preceding mind is not the following mind. Each is separate. These facts are perceivable personally, and for this purpose one must proceed with the contemplation.

A-sariram—Incorporeal.

Mind has no substance and no form. It is not easy to distinguish it as with matter. In the case of matter the structure of body, head, hands and legs is very prominent and easily noticed. If it is asked what is matter it can be handled and shown. As for mind it is not easy to describe, because it has no substance and no form. For this reason it is not possible to carry out laboratory analytical experiments of mind. However, one could fully understand if it is explained that the knowing of an object is mind. To understand the mind minutely it is essential to contemplate the mind at every time of its occurring. When the contemplation is fairly advanced the mind's approach to its object is clearly comprehended. It appears as if each is making a direct leap towards its object. In order to know the true manner of mind the contemplation is thus prescribed.

Guha-sayam—Stays in the cave.

Because this mind usually comes into existence depending on mindbase and other sense doors situated in the body, it is said that it stays in the cave.

Ye Cittam Samyamessanti, Mokkhanti Mara-bandhana—If the Yogi could restrain this mind he would be freed from the bondage of Death.

It is said that the mind should be contemplated each time as it occurs: mind can thus be controlled by means of contemplation. On his successfully controlling the mind the Yogi would win freedom from the bondage of Death. It will be seen now that it is important to note the mind at every occurrence. As soon as it is noted mind usually vanishes. For instance, by noting once or twice as "intending, intending" it is found that intention disappears at once. Then the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling; rising, falling," should be reverted to.

During the time of proceeding with the usual exercise, one may feel wanting to swallow saliva. It should be noted as "wanting" and on gathering saliva as "gathering," and on swallowing as "swallowing" in the serial order of occurrences. The reason for contemplating in this case is because there may be a persisting personal view as "wanting to swallow is I: swallowing is also I." In actual fact, "wanting to swallow" is mind and not I and "swallowing" is matter and not I. There exists only mind and matter at that time. By means of contemplation in this manner one will understand clearly the process of actual facts. So also in the case of spitting it should be noted as "wanting" when one wants to spit, as "bending" on bending the neck (which should be done slowly), as "looking, seeing" on looking and as "spitting" on spitting. Afterwards, the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be proceeded with.

Because of the fact of sitting for a long time there will arise in the body unpleasant feelings of being stiff, being hot and so forth. These sensations should be noted as they occur. Mind should be fixed on the spot and a note made as "stiff, stiff" on feeling stiff, as "hot, hot" on feeling hot, as "painful, painful" on feeling painful, and "prickly, prickly" on feeling a prickly sensation, and as "tired, tired" on feeling tired. These unpleasant feelings are Feelings of Pain (**dukkha vedana**) and the contemplation of these feelings is Insight Into Feeling (**vedana-nupassana**).

Owing to the absence of knowledge in Insight Into Feeling, there used to prevail a wrong view of holding them as one's own personality or self, that is to say, "I am feeling stiff: I am feeling hot:

I am feeling painful: I was feeling well formerly but now I feel uncomfortable" in the manner of a single self. In real fact unpleasant feelings arise owing to disagreeable impressions in the body. Like the light of an electric bulb which can continue to burn on the continuous supply of energy so is the case of feelings, which arise anew in series on every occasion of coming in contact with disagreeable impressions.

It is essential to understand these feelings clearly. At the beginning of noting as "stiff, stiff; hot, hot; painful, painful" he may feel that such disagreeable feeling grows stronger, and then he will notice that the mind wanting to change the posture arises. This mind should be noted as "wanting, wanting." Then a return should be made to the feeling and noted as "stiff, stiff," or "hot, hot," and so forth. If the contemplation is continued with great patience in this manner, such unpleasant feelings will pass away.

There is a saying, "Patience leads to Nirvana." Evidently this saying is more applicable in this case of contemplation than in any other case. Plenty of patience is needed in contemplation. If a Yogi cannot bear unpleasant feelings with patience but frequently changes his posture during contemplation, he cannot expect to gain Concentration. Without Concentration there is no chance of acquiring Spiritual Knowledge of Insight (**vipassana-nana**). Without this, the attainment of Path, Fruition, and Nirvana cannot be won. Patience is of great importance in contemplation. Patience is mostly needed to bear up unpleasant feelings. This means the observance of the Cultivation of Patience (**khantisamvara**) discipline. He should not therefore change his posture immediately when he feels unpleasant sensations but must proceed with noting them as "stiff, stiff; hot, hot" and so on. Such normal painful sensations will ordinarily pass away. In the case of strong Concentration it will be found that even great pains will pass away when they are being noted with patience. On the fading away of suffering or pain the usual exercise should be reverted to and noting carried out as "rising, falling; rising, falling."

On the other hand it may be found that pains or unpleasant feelings do not pass away in spite of making a note with great patience. In such a case it cannot be helped but to change the

posture. One must, of course, submit to superior forces. When Concentration is not strong enough pains will not pass away soon. In these circumstances there will often arise a mind wanting to change the posture, and this mind should be noted as "wanting, wanting," after which it should be continued to note as "lifting, lifting" on lifting the hand; as "moving, moving" on moving it forward. These bodily actions should be carried out slowly, and these slow movements should be followed up and noted as "lifting, lifting; moving, moving; touching, touching" in the successive order of processes. Again on swaying the body a note should be made as "swaying, swaying"; on raising the leg as "raising, raising"; on moving as "moving, moving"; and on putting down as "putting, putting." If then there is nothing to do, it should be reverted to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling; rising, falling." There should be no stop or break in between. The preceding act of noting and the one which follows should be contiguous. Similarly the preceding Concentration and the one which follows should be contiguous, and the preceding Spiritual Knowledge (**nana**) and the one which follows should be contiguous. In this way the gradual development, by stages, of Mindfulness, Concentration and Spiritual Knowledge takes place, and depending on their full development the final stage of Spiritual Knowledge of the Path (**magga-nana**) is attained.

In the practice of Vipassana Meditation it is important to follow the example of a person who tries to make a fire. In olden days a person had to work without stopping by rubbing two dry sticks till fire was produced. As the sticks got hotter and hotter, the more effort was needed, and rubbing had to be carried out incessantly. Only when the fire was produced was he then at liberty to take rest. Similarly a Yogi should work hard so that there may not be any break between the preceding noting and the one which follows, and the preceding Concentration and the one which follows. He should revert to his usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" when he has noted the painful sensations.

While being thus occupied with his usual exercise, he may again feel the itching sensation somewhere in the body. He should then fix

his mind on the spot and make a note as "itching, itching." Itching is an unpleasant sensation. As soon as it is felt there arises a mind wanting to rub or scratch. This mind should be noted as "wanting, wanting" after which no rubbing must be done as yet but a return must be made to itching and a note made as "itching, itching." While occupied with contemplation in this manner, itching used to disappear in most cases. Then the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to. If on the other hand it is found that itching does not disappear but it is necessary to rub or scratch, the contemplation of the successive processes should be carried out by noting the mind as "wanting, wanting." It should then be continued by noting as "raising, raising," on raising the hand; as "moving, moving" on moving the hand; as "touching, touching" when the hand touches the spot; as "rubbing, rubbing" or "scratching, scratching" when the hand rubs or scratches; as "withdrawing, withdrawing" on withdrawing the hand; as "touching, knowing" when the hand touches the body; and then afterwards contemplation should be reverted to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling." In every case of changing the postures of contemplation of the successive processes should be carried out similarly and carefully.

While thus carefully proceeding with the contemplation it is found that painful feelings or unpleasant sensations arise in the body of their own accord. Ordinarily people used to change the posture as soon as they feel even the slight unpleasant sensation of tiredness or feeling hot without taking heed of these incidents. The change is carried out quite heedlessly just while the seed of pain is beginning to grow. Thus painful feelings fail to take place in a distinctive manner. For this reason it is said that Posture (**iriya-patha**), as a rule, hides the painful feelings from view. People generally think that they are feeling well for days and nights. They consider that painful feelings occur at the time of an attack of a dangerous disease.

The fact is just the contrast of what people think. Let anyone try and see how long he can keep himself in a sitting posture without moving or changing. He will find it uncomfortable after a short while, say five or ten minutes, and then he will find it unbearable after fifteen or twenty minutes. He will then be compelled to move

or change the posture, by either raising or lowering his head, moving the hands or legs by swaying his body either forward or backward. Many movements usually take place during a short time and the number would be very large if they are to be counted for a day. However, no one appears to be aware of these facts because no one takes heed of them. Such is the order in every case. While in the case of a Yogi who is always mindful of his actions and is proceeding with contemplation, body impressions in their own respective nature are therefore distinctly noticed. They cannot help but reveal themselves fully in their own nature because he is watching until they come to the full view. Though a painful sensation arises he keeps on noting it: he does not ordinarily attempt to change or move. Then on the arising of mind wanting to change he at once makes a note of it as "wanting, wanting" and afterwards he returns again to the painful sensation and continues his noting of it. He changes or moves only when he finds the pain unbearable. In this case also he begins by noting the wanting mind and proceeds with noting carefully every action in the process of moving. This is why Posture can no longer hide painful sensation. Often a Yogi feels painful sensations creeping from here and there or he may feel a hot sensation, aching sensation, itching, or he may feel that the whole body is a mass of painful sensation. That is how painful sensations are found to be predominating because Posture cannot cover them.

If he intends to change the posture from sitting to standing, he should in the first place make a note of the intending mind as "intending, intending" and proceed with the acts of arranging the hands and legs in the successive order by noting, "raising, moving, stretching, touching, pressing, and so forth." When the body sways forward it should be noted as "swaying, swaying." While in the course of standing up, rising, there occurs lightness in the body. Attention should be fixed on these factors and a note made as "rising, rising." The act of rising up should be carried out slowly. During the course of practice it is most appropriate if a Yogi acts feebly and slowly in all his activities just like a weak sick person. Perhaps the case of a person suffering from lumbago would be a more fitting example here. The patient must be cautious and move

slowly to avoid pains. In the same manner a Yogi should always try and keep to slow motions in all the actions. The lowest speed is necessary to enable Mindfulness, Concentration, and Spiritual Knowledge to catch up. One has lived all the time in a light-hearted manner, and he just begins seriously to train himself for keeping his mind in the body. It is the beginning only and Mindfulness and Spiritual Knowledge have not yet been properly geared up while the physical and mental processes are moving at top speed. It is therefore imperative to bring the top-level speed of these processes to the lowest gear so as to make it possible for the Mindfulness and Spiritual Knowledge to keep pace with them. It is therefore instructed that slow motion exercises should be carried out at all times.

Further it may be mentioned that it is advisable for a Yogi to behave like a blind person throughout the course of training. A person without any restrained manner will not look dignified because he usually looks at things and persons wantonly. He cannot obtain a steady and calm state. While on the other hand the blind person behaves in a composed manner by sitting sedately with downcast eyes: he never turns to any direction to look at things or persons because he is blind and cannot see them. Even if a person comes near him and speaks to him he never turns around. This composed manner is worthy of imitation. A Yogi should act in the same manner while carrying out the contemplation: he should not look anywhere; his mind must be intent solely on the object of contemplation; while in the sitting posture he must be intently noting as "rising, falling." Even if strange things occur nearby, he must not look at them carefully: he must simply make a note as "seeing, seeing" and then pass on to the usual exercise by noting as "rising, falling." A Yogi should have a high regard for the exercise and carry it out with due respect so much so as to be mistaken for a blind person.

In this respect certain female Yogis were found to be in perfect form. They carefully carried out the exercise with all due respect in accordance with the instructions. Their manner was very composed, and they were always intent on the objects of contemplation. They never looked around. When they walked they were always intent on

the steps. Their steps were light, smooth and slow. Every Yogi should follow their example.

It is necessary for a Yogi to behave like a deaf person also. Ordinarily a person, as soon as he hears a sound, turns around and looks at the direction from where the sound comes. Or he turns around towards the person who speaks to him and makes a reply. He will not behave in a sedate manner. While on the other hand, a deaf person behaves in a composed manner: he does not take heed of any sound or talk because he never hears them. Similarly a Yogi should conduct himself in like manner without taking heed of any unimportant talk nor should he deliberately listen to any talk or speech. If he happens to hear any sound or talk he should at once make a note as "hearing, hearing" and then return to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling." He should proceed with his contemplation intently so much so as to be mistaken for a deaf person.

It should be remembered that the carrying out intently of contemplation is the only concern of a Yogi; other things seen or heard are not his concern. He should not take heed of them even though they may appear to be strange or curious. When he sees any sights he must ignore them as if he does not see; so also in the case of voices or sounds he must ignore them as if he does not hear. In the case of bodily actions he must act slowly and feebly as if he were sick and very weak.

It is therefore emphasized that the act of pulling up the body to the standing posture should be carried out slowly. On coming to an erect position a note should be made as "standing, standing"; if he happens to look around, a note should be made as "looking, seeing"; and on walking each step should be noted as "right step, left step" or "walking, walking." In each step attention should be fixed on the movement from the point of lifting the leg to the point of putting down. While walking in quick steps or taking a long walk, a note on one section of each step as "right step, left step" or "walking, walking" will do. In the case of taking a slow walk, each step may be divided into three sections of lifting, pushing forward and putting down respectively. In the beginning of the exercise a note should be

made on two sections in each step as "lifting," by fixing the attention on the upward movement of the leg from the beginning to the end, and as "putting" on the downward movement from the beginning to the end. Thus the exercise which starts with the first step by noting as "lifting, putting" now ends. Here it may be mentioned that, at the time of noting as "putting" when the leg is put down in the first step, the other leg happens usually to lift up to begin the next step. This should not be allowed to happen. Next step should begin only after the end of the first step, such as "lifting, putting" for the first one and "lifting, putting" for the next step. After two or three days this exercise would be easy and he should carry out the exercise of noting each step in three sections as "lifting, pushing, putting." For the present a Yogi should start the exercise by noting as "right step, left step," or "walking, walking" while walking quickly, and by noting as "lifting, putting" while walking slowly.

In the course of his walk he may feel wanting to sit down. He should then make a note as "wanting, wanting"; if he then happens to look up as "looking, seeing; looking, seeing"; on going to the place for sitting as "lifting, putting"; on stopping as "stopping, stopping"; on turning as "turning, turning"; when he feels wanting to sit as "wanting, wanting." In the act of sitting there occurs a heaviness in the body and also a downward pull. Attention should be fixed on these factors and a note made as "sitting, sitting, sitting." After having sat down there would be movements of bringing the hands and legs into position. They should be noted as "moving, bending, stretching, and so forth." If there is nothing to do and if he is sitting quietly he should revert to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling."

If in the course of contemplation he feels painful or tired or hot he should make a note of them and then revert to the usual exercise by noting as "rising, falling." If he feels sleepy he should make a note as "sleepy, sleepy," and proceed with the noting of all acts of preparing for lying down and bringing into position the hands and legs as "raising, pressing, moving, supporting"; when the body sways as "swaying, swaying"; when the legs stretch as "stretching, stretching"; and when the body drops and lies flat as "lying, lying."

These trifling acts in lying down are also important and they should not be neglected. There is every possibility of attaining enlightenment during this short time. On the full development of Concentration and Spiritual Knowledge enlightenment is attainable during the present moment of bending or stretching. In this way Venerable Ananda (nephew and personal attendant of the Buddha) attained Arhatship at the very moment of lying down.

About the beginning of the fourth month after the great final Nirvana after death (**maha-parinirvana**) of the Lord Buddha it was arranged to hold the first **sangayana**. By this term is meant the council of monks who collectively made classification, examination, confirmation and recitation of all teachings of Lord Buddha. At that time five hundred monks were chosen for the work. Of them four hundred and ninety-nine were **Arhats** (Adepts, who have become perfect and have attained enlightenment) while Venerable Ananda alone was a **Sotapanna** (Stream Winner, i.e., the first stage on the path when one has entered the stream leading to enlightenment). In order to attend the Council as an Arhat on the same level with the others he made his utmost effort to carry on with the meditation until just one day before the first day of the Council. That was on the fourth waning of the month of August. He proceeded with the contemplation of Mindfulness of the Body (**kaya-gata-sati**) which is also known as the Application of Mindfulness to Insight into the Functioning of the Body (**kaya-nupassana satipatthana**) and kept on walking the whole night. It might be in the same manner of noting as "right step, left step" or "walking, walking." He was thus occupied with the intent contemplation of mental and material processes in each step till the dawn of the next day. But he had not yet attained the Arhatship.

Then the Venerable Ananda thought thus: "I have done my utmost. Lord Buddha used to say, 'Ananda, you possess full Perfections (**paramis**). Do proceed with the practice of meditation. You will surely attain Arhatship one day.' I have tried my level best so much that I can be counted as one of those who ever did their best in meditation. What may be the reason for my failure?" Then he remembered: "Ah! I was overzealous in keeping solely to the

exercise of walking throughout the night. There was an excess of Vigor and less Concentration, which indeed was responsible for the state of Restlessness (**uddhacca**). It is now necessary to stop walking so as to bring Vigor in level with Concentration and to proceed with the contemplation in a lying position." Venerable Ananda accordingly entered his room and sat down on the bench and then began to lie down. It was said that Venerable Ananda attained Arhatship thus at the moment of lying down or rather at the moment of contemplating as "lying, lying."

This manner of attaining Arhatship has been recorded as a strange event in the Commentaries because this manner was outside of the four regular postures of walking, standing, sitting and lying down. At that moment Venerable Ananda could not be regarded strictly to have been in a standing posture because his feet were off the floor, nor could he be regarded as sitting because his body was in a leaning position quite close to a pillow, nor in a laying posture because his head had not touched the pillow and the body did not lay flat as yet. As Venerable Ananda was a Stream Winner he had to develop through three other higher stages: the Path and Fruition of a Once-Returner, second stage on the Path; Path and Fruition of a Never-Returner, third stage on the Path; and Path and Fruition of an Adept, fourth and final stage of the Path (**sakadagami magga & phala, anagami magga & phala, arahatta magga & phala**) in his final attainment. It took a moment only. Every care is therefore needed to carry on the practice of contemplation without relaxation or omission.

In the act of lying down, contemplation should be carried out with due care. When one feels sleepy and wants to lie down a note should be made as "sleepy, sleepy; wanting, wanting"; on raising the hand as "raising, raising"; on stretching as "stretching, stretching"; on touching as "touching, touching"; on pressing as "pressing, pressing"; after swaying the body and on dropping it down as "lying, lying." The action of lying down should be carried out very slowly. On touching with the pillow it should be noted as "touching, touching"—there are many places of touch all over the body but each spot only need be noted at one time. In the lying position there are

many bodily actions for bringing the legs and hands into position also. These actions should be noted carefully as "raising, stretching, bending, moving, and so on." On turning the body a note should be made as "turning, turning" and when there is nothing particular the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to. When lying on the side or on the back there are usually no particular things to be noted: then the usual exercise must be reverted to.

But there may be times when the mind wanders while one is in the lying posture. This wandering mind should be noted as "going, going" when it goes out, as "arriving, arriving" when it reaches a place, as "planning, reflecting, and so forth" on each state in the same manner as in the case of contemplation in the sitting posture. Mind generally vanishes on being noted once or twice. Then the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to. There may be also instances of swallowing or spitting saliva, or feeling of painful sensations, hot sensations, itching sensations, etc., or of bodily actions in changing the position and moving the limbs. They should be contemplated as each occurs. (When sufficient strength in Concentration is gained it will be possible even to carry on with the contemplation of each act of opening and closing of the eyelids and winking.) Afterwards one should then return to the usual exercise when there is no other thing to do.

Though it is late in the night and it is time for sleep, it is not advisable to give up the contemplation and go to sleep. Anyone who has a keen interest in contemplation must be prepared to face the risk of spending many nights without sleep.

The scriptures are emphatic on the necessity of developing the very qualities of Energetic Vigor Which Consists of Four Limbs, i.e., varieties (**calu-ranga viriya**) in the practice of meditation. In the hard struggle one may be reduced to a mere skeleton of skin, bone and sinew when his flesh and blood wither away and dry up but he should not give up his efforts so long as he has not attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavor. These instructions should be followed with a strong determination. It may be possible to keep awake if there is strong enough Concentration to

beat off the sleep but he will fall asleep if sleep gets an upper hand. When one feels sleepy he should make a note as "sleepy, sleepy"; when the eyelids are drooping as "drooping, drooping"; dazzled as "dazzled, dazzled." After the contemplation in the manner indicated one may be able to shake off the sleepiness and feel fresh again. This feeling should be noted as "feeling fresh, feeling fresh" and after which the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to. However, in spite of his determination one may feel unable to keep himself awake if he is very sleepy. In a lying posture it is more easy to fall asleep. A beginner should therefore try to keep himself mostly in the postures of sitting and walking.

But when the night is late he will be compelled to lie down and proceed with the contemplation of "rising" and "falling." In this position he may perhaps fall asleep. During the time of sleep it is not possible to carry on with the contemplation. It is an interval for a Yogi to relax. An hour's sleep will give him an hour's relaxation and if he continues to sleep for two, three or four hours he will get relaxation for longer hours. But it would not be advisable for a Yogi to sleep more than four hours, which is pretty long and ample for a normal sleep.

On waking up a Yogi should start his contemplation from the moment of awakening. To be fully occupied with intent contemplation throughout the waking hours is the routine of a Yogi who works hard with true aspiration for the attainment of Path and its Fruition. If it is not possible to catch the waking moment, he should start with the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling." Or if he becomes aware firstly of the fact of reflecting he should begin his contemplation by noting as "reflecting, reflecting," and then revert to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling." Or if he becomes aware firstly of hearing a voice or sound he should begin by noting as "hearing, hearing," and then revert to the usual exercise. As soon as one wakes up there may be bodily actions in turning this side or that side, and in moving the hands and legs and so forth. These actions should be contemplated in successive order. Or if he becomes aware of the mind leading to various bodily actions he should start his contemplation by noting the mind in the first place. Or if he

becomes aware firstly of the painful sensations he should start by noting the painful sensations and then proceed with bodily actions. If he stays quietly without moving, the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be attended to. If he intends to get up he should note as "intending, intending" and then proceed with the noting of all actions serially in bringing the legs and hands into position. It should be noted as "raising, raising" on raising the body, as "sitting, sitting" when the body is erect and in sitting posture, and if there are any other actions of bringing legs and hands into position these actions should also be noted. If there are no particular things the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should be reverted to.

So far, things relating to the objects of contemplation in connection with the four postures and changing from one posture to another have been mentioned. It is merely a description of the general outline of major objects of contemplation to be carried out in the course of practice. Yet in the beginning of the practice, it is difficult to follow up all of them in contemplation. Many things will be omitted. But on gaining sufficient strength in Concentration it is easy to follow up in contemplation not only those already enumerated but many more. With gradual development of Mindfulness and Concentration the pace of Spiritual Knowledge quickens, and thus many more can be perceived. It is necessary to work up to this high level.

Contemplation should be carried out also in the case of washing the face in the morning or when taking a bath. As it is necessary to act quickly in these cases, contemplation should be carried out to such an extent as far as possible in these circumstances. On stretching the hand to catch hold of the mug as "stretching"; on catching hold of the mug as "holding"; on dipping the mug as "dipping"; on bringing the mug towards the body as "bringing"; on pouring the water as "pouring"; on feeling cold as "cold"; on rubbing as "rubbing" and so on. There are also many actions in changing or arranging the dress, in arranging the bed or bed sheets, and in opening the door and so on. These actions should be contemplated in detail serially as much as possible.

At the time of taking meal contemplation should be started from the time of looking at the meal table as "looking, seeing; looking, seeing"; when stretching the hand to the plate as "stretching, stretching"; when the hand touches the food as "touching, hot, hot"; when gathering the food as "gathering, gathering"; when catching hold of the food as "catching, catching"; after lifting when the hand is being brought up as "bringing, bringing"; when the neck is being bent down as "bending, bending"; when the food is being placed in the mouth as "placing, placing"; when withdrawing the hand as "withdrawing, withdrawing"; when the hand touches the plate as "touching, touching"; when the neck is being straightened as "straightening, straightening"; when chewing the food as "chewing, chewing"; at the time of chewing when the taste of food is known as "knowing, knowing"; when he likes the taste as "liking, liking"; when he finds it pleasant as "pleasant, pleasant"; when swallowing as "swallowing, swallowing." This is an illustration of the routine of contemplation on partaking of each morsel of food till the meal is finished. In this case also it is difficult to follow up all actions at the beginning of the practice. There will be many omissions. He should not, however, hesitate but must try and follow up as much as he can. With the gradual advancement of the practice it will be easy to note many more than those mentioned here.

Now the lessons for the practical exercise of contemplation are almost complete. As they are explained in detail and at some length it is not easy to remember all of them. For the sake of easy memory, a summary of important and essential points will be mentioned. They are few.

In the case of taking a walk a Yogi should contemplate the movements of the steps. While walking briskly each step should be noted as "right step, left step" respectively. Mind should be fixed intently on the movement of each step. While in the course of walking slowly each step should be noted in two sections as "lifting, putting; lifting, putting." While in a sitting posture the usual exercise of contemplation by noting the movements of the abdomen as "rising, falling, rising, falling" should be carried out. The same manner of contemplation by noting as "rising, falling, rising, falling" should be carried out in the case of lying posture also.

If it is found that the mind wanders during the course of noting as "rising, falling," it should not be let off but it should be followed up immediately. On imagining it should be noted as "imagining, imagining"; on thinking as "thinking, thinking"; on the mind going out as "going, going"; on the mind arriving at a place as "arriving, arriving"; and so forth on every occurrence. And the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling" should then be reverted to. When there occur feelings of tiredness in hands, legs or other limbs, or of hot or prickly or aching or itching sensations, they should be immediately followed up and noted as "tired, hot, prickly, aching, itching, and so on" as the case may be. A return should then be made to the usual exercise of noting as "rising, falling." When there are acts of bending or stretching the hands and legs, or moving the neck or limbs, or swaying the body to and fro, they should be followed up and noted in the serial order as they occur. The usual exercise of noting as rising, falling" should then be reverted to.

If the practice is proceeded with in the manner indicated, the number of objects will gradually increase in course of time. At first there will be many omissions because mind used to wander without any restraint. However, one should not lose heart on this account. This difficulty is usually encountered in the beginning of the practice. After some time mind cannot play truant any longer because it is always found out every time it roves. It therefore remains fixedly on an object to which it is directed. As rising occurs the mind makes a note of it, and thus the object and the mind coincide. As falling occurs the mind makes a note of it and thus these two coincide. There is always a pair of object and the mind which knows the object at every time of noting. These two elements of material object and knowing mind only arise in pairs, and apart from these two there does not exist any other thing either in the form of a person or self. This fact will be perceptible personally in due course.

The fact that matter and mind are two separate things will be clearly perceived during the time of noting as "rising, falling." The two elements of matter and mind are linked up in a pair and their arising coincides, that is, the material process of rising coincides with the mind knowing it, the material process of falling coincides with

the mind knowing it, and the respective processes of lifting, pushing, putting coincide with the respective minds knowing the processes. This knowledge in respect of matter and mind rising separately is called Spiritual Knowledge of Insight (**nama-rupa-pariceheda-nana**). It is the preliminary stage in the whole course of Spiritual Knowledge of Insight. It is important to have this preliminary stage developed in a proper manner.

On continuing the practice of contemplation for some time, there will be a considerable progress in Mindfulness and Concentration. At this high level it will be perceptible that, on every occasion of noting, each process arises and vanishes at the very moment. But it is, on the other hand, considered generally by uninstructed people that body and mind remain in a permanent state throughout the life or existence, that the same body of childhood has grown up into manhood, that the same young mind has grown up into maturity and that both body and mind are one and the same person. The real fact is not so. Nothing is permanent. Every thing comes into existence for a moment, and then vanishes. Nothing can remain even for a winking moment. Changes are taking place very swiftly and they will be perceived in due course. While carrying on the contemplation by noting as "rising, falling" and so forth one would perceive that these processes generally come up and disappear one after another in succession very swiftly. On thus perceiving that every thing vanishes on the very point of noting, a Yogi is satisfied with the fact that nothing is permanent. This knowledge regarding the impermanent state of things is Spiritual Insight Into Transience (**aniccanupassana-nana**).

A Yogi then feels that this ever-changing state of things is distressing and not to be desired. This is Insight Into Suffering (**dukkanupassana-nana**). And on suffering also many painful feelings it is regarded as a mere heap of suffering. This, too, is of the same insight.

Then it is perceived that the elements of matter and mind never follow one's wish but they act according to their own nature and conditioning. While being engaged in the act of noting the processes, a Yogi is convinced that these processes are not controllable and they

are neither person nor living entity nor self in the real sense. This is Insight Into the Absence of A Self (**anattanupassana-nana**).

When a Yogi has fully developed the Insights into Impermanence, Suffering, and Absence of A Self, he will realize Nirvana. From time immemorial Buddhas, Arhats and Holy Ones realized Nirvana by this means of Vipassana. It is the high way leading to Nirvana. As a matter of fact, Vipassana consists of the four Applications of Mindfulness (**satipatthanas**) and is therefore the high way to Nirvana.

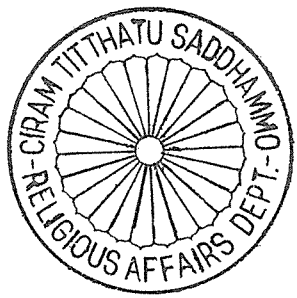
Yogis have now come to take up the course of training in contemplation. It should be borne in mind that they are on the high way which had been taken by Buddhas, Arhats and Holy Ones. This opportunity is afforded to them apparently because of their Perfections of previous endeavors in seeking and wishing for it, and also of their present mature condition. They should rejoice at heart for being availed of this opportunity. They should also feel assured that by walking on this high way without wavering, they will gain the personal experience of the highly developed Concentration and Knowledge as had already been known to Buddhas, Arhats and Holy Ones. They will develop such a pure state of Concentration as has never been known before in the course of their life and thus enjoy many innocent pleasures as a result of the advanced Concentration.

They will also learn the practical knowledge of Impermanence, Suffering, and the Absence of A Self by having a direct personal experience of the actual facts, and then realize Nirvana on the full development of these knowledges. It will not take long to achieve the object, but possibly in a month, or twenty days, or fifteen days; or on rare occasions even in seven days for a selected few with extraordinary Perfection.

Yogis should, therefore, proceed with the practice of contemplation in great earnest and with full confidence trusting that it will surely lead to the development of Spiritual Knowledge of the Path and Its Fruition, and to the Realization of Nirvana. They will then be free from the Erroneous View That There is A Self (**sakkaya-ditthi**) and Doubt (**vicikiccha**) and will no longer be subject to the round of rebirths in the miserable existence of hell, animals or hungry ghosts.

Practical Insight Meditation

The Venerable Mahāsī Sayādaw
Agga Mahā Paṇḍita



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
RANGOON, BURMA.

1979

Practical Insight Meditation

PREFACE

It is a truism to say that nobody likes suffering and everybody seeks happiness. In this world of ours, human beings are making all possible efforts for prevention and alleviation of suffering, and enjoyment of happiness. But nevertheless their efforts are mainly directed to the physical well-being by material means. Happiness is, after all, conditioned by attitudes of mind, and yet only a few persons give real thought to mental development, fewer still who practice mind training in earnest.

To illustrate this point, attention may be drawn to the commonplace habits of cleaning and tidying up one's body, the endless pursuits of food, clothing and shelter, and the tremendous technological progress achieved for raising the material standard of living, for improving the means of transport and communications, and for prevention and cure of diseases and ailments. All these strivings are, in the main, concerned with the care and nourishment of the body. It must be recognized that they are essential. However, these human efforts and achievements cannot possibly bring about the alleviation or eradication of suffering associated with old age and disease, domestic infelicity and economic troubles, in short, with nonsatisfaction of wants and desires. Sufferings of this nature are not overcome by material means; they can be overcome only by mind training and mental development.

Then, it becomes clear that the right way must be sought for training, stabilizing and purifying the mind. This way is found in the *Mahā Satipatthāna Sutra*, a

well-known discourse of the Buddha, delivered well over 2500 years ago. The Buddha declared thus:

"This is the sole way for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destroying of pain and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of *nirvana*, namely the four foundations of mindfulness."

The four foundations of mindfulness are (1) the contemplation of the body, (2) the contemplation of feelings, (3) the contemplation of mind, and (4) the contemplation of mind objects.

Obviously, this way should be followed by those in search of happiness, with a view to getting rid of the impurities of mind, which are the causes of their sufferings.

If one were asked whether he wishes to overcome sorrow and lamentation, he would surely say, "Yes." Then, he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

If one were asked whether he wishes to destroy pain and grief, he would not hesitate to reply in the affirmative. Then, he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

If one were asked whether he wishes to reach the right path and realize *nirvana*, the state of being absolutely free from old age, decay and death and from all sufferings, he would certainly give an affirmative answer. Then, he, nay everybody, should practice the four foundations of mindfulness.

How shall one practice the four foundations of mindfulness? In the *Mahā Satipatthāna Sutra*, the Buddha said, "Dwell practicing body contemplation, feeling contemplation, mind contemplation and mind objects contemplation." Without the guidance of a well-qualified teacher, however, it will not be easy for an average person to practice these contemplations in a systematic manner in order to make progress towards development of concentration and insight.

Having undergone myself a most intensive practical

course of *satipatthāna* meditation under the personal guidance of the Most Venerable Mingun Jetavan Sayadaw of Thaton, I imparted the technique of meditation ever since 1938 and gave personal instruction as well as through books and lectures to several thousands of yogis. In compliance with the requests of those of the earlier batches, who had benefited by my personal instructions, I wrote a treatise on *vipassana* or insight meditation, in two volumes. The treatise was completed in the year 1944 and has been published in seven editions. In all the chapters, except in Chapter V, dissertations and discussions are made with references to Pali texts, commentaries and subcommentaries. In Chapter V, I chose to write in common language for easy understanding by my pupils as to how they should begin and then proceed step by step, stating fully the salient features, in line with *Visuddhimagga* and some other texts.

This present book is the English translation of the said Chapter V. The first fourteen pages of the Burmese original were translated into English in 1954 by U Pe Thin, an old pupil of mine, for the benefit of those who came from abroad to our Meditation Center. Pages 15 to 51 of the Burmese original were translated into English, in compliance with the wish of the Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera, by Myanaung U Tin, a disciple and *dayaka* of mine. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the area of our Meditation Center, Thathana Yeiktha, is nearly twenty-four acres, with over fifty buildings to house the meditation teachers and yogis, monks as well as lay, both men and women.

The Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera put this translation into final literary shape after obtaining confirmation of his valuable suggestions. U Pe Thin's translation was revised by and improved upon, as to style, by Miss Mary McCollum, an American Buddhist lady. She practiced *satipatthāna* meditation under the guidance of Anagarika Munindra at Burmese Vihara, Bodh-Gaya, Bihar, India. Anagarika Munindra stayed with us for a considerable period. He sent her revision to us for perusal

and approval. When done, it was forwarded to the Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera. This book is, therefore, the coordination and combined publication of the aforesaid two translations, with my preface added thereto.

Chapter V of my Burmese treatise, as mentioned earlier, was written in common linguistic style. I should like to say here that the doctrinal terms found in this book without Pali names are fully explained in "Progress of Insight," translated from my Pali treatise into English by the Venerable Nyanaponika Mahathera. His book, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, is itself a veritable mine of information and instruction on this subject of vital importance.

In conclusion, I would like (1) to say that I deeply appreciate the services of those who have done the translations and revisions as well as of those who are responsible for the publication of this book, (2) to urge the readers of this book not to be content with the theoretical knowledge contained therein but to apply that knowledge to systematic and sustained practice, and (3) to express my earnest wish that they gain insight soon and enjoy all the benefits vouchsafed by the Buddha in the preamble of the *Mahā Satipatthāna Sutra.*

October 1, 1970
'Thathana Yeiktha,'
16, Hermitage Road,
Rangoon, Burma

Bhaddanta Sobhana
Agga Maha Pandita
Mahasi Sayadaw

Part I
Basic Practice

Preparatory Stage

If you sincerely desire to develop contemplation and attain insight in this your present life, you must give up worldly thoughts and actions during training. This course of action is for the purification of conduct, the essential preliminary step towards the proper development of contemplation. You must also observe the rules of discipline prescribed for laymen (or for monks, as the case may be), for they are important in gaining insight. For layfolk, these rules comprise the eight precepts which Buddhist devotees observe on holidays *(uposatha)* and during periods of meditation.[1] An additional rule is not to speak with contempt, in jest, or malice to or about any of the noble ones who have attained states of sanctity.[2] If you have done so, then personally apologize to him or her or make the apology through your meditation instructor. If in the past you have spoken contemptuously to a noble one who is presently unavailable or deceased, confess this offense to your meditation instructor or introspectively to yourself.

The old masters of Buddhist tradition suggest that you entrust yourself to the enlightened one, the Buddha, during training period, for you may be alarmed if it happens that your own state of mind produces unwholesome or frightening visions during contemplation. Also place yourself under the guidance of your meditation instructor, for, then, he can talk to you frankly about your work in contemplation and give you the guidance he thinks necessary. These are the advantages of placing

trust in the enlightened one, the Buddha, and practicing under the guidance of your instructor. The aim of this practice and its greatest benefit is release from greed, hatred and delusion, which are the roots of all evil and suffering. This intensive course in insight training can lead you to such release. So work ardently with this end in view so that your training will be successfully completed. This kind of training in contemplation, based on the foundations of mindfulness *(satipatthāna)*, had been taken by successive buddhas and noble ones who attained release. You are to be congratulated on having the opportunity to take the same kind of training they had undergone.

It is also important for you to begin your training with a brief contemplation on the "four protections" which the enlightened one, the Buddha, offers you for reflection. It is helpful for your psychological welfare at this stage to reflect on them. The subjects of these four protective reflections are the Buddha himself, lovingkindness, the loathsome aspects of the body, and death.

First, devote yourself to the Buddha by sincerely appreciating his nine chief qualities in this way:

> Truly, the Buddha is holy, fully enlightened, perfect in knowledge and conduct, a welfarer, world-knower, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and mankind, the awakened and exalted one.

Second, reflect upon all sentient beings as the receivers of your lovingkindness, be fortified by your thoughts of lovingkindness and identify yourself with all sentient beings without distinction, thus:

> May I be free from enmity, disease and grief . . . .
> As I am, so also may my parents, preceptors, teachers, intimate, indifferent and inimical beings be free from enmity, disease and grief. May they be released from suffering.

Third, reflect upon the repulsive nature of the body to assist you in diminishing the unwholesome attachment that so many people have for the body. Dwell upon some of its impurities, such as stomach, intestines, phlegm, pus,

blood.[3] Ponder these impurities so that the absurd fondness of the body may be eliminated.

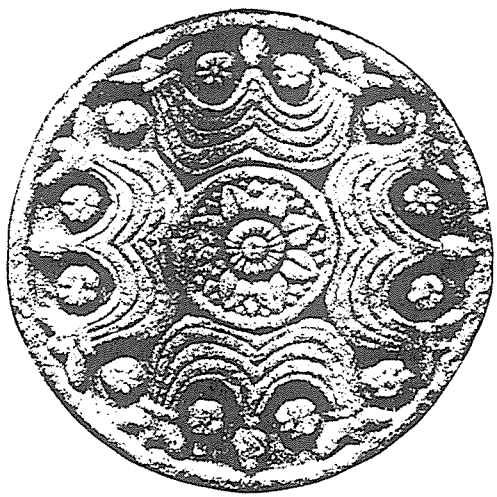
The fourth protection for your psychological benefit is to reflect on the phenomenon of ever-approaching death. Buddhist teachings stress that life is uncertain, but death is certain, life is precarious, but death is sure. Life has death as its goal. There is birth, disease, suffering, old age, and eventual death. These are all aspects of the process of existence.

To begin training, take the sitting posture with legs crossed. You might feel more comfortable if the legs are not interlocked but evenly placed on the ground, without pressing one against the other. If you find that sitting on the floor interferes with contemplation, then obtain a more comfortable way of sitting. Now proceed with each exercise in contemplation as described.

Basic Exercise I

Try to keep your mind (but not your eyes) on the abdomen. You will thereby come to know the movements of rising and falling of this organ. If these movements are not clear to you in the beginning, then place both hands on the abdomen to feel these rising and falling movements. After a short time the upward movement of inhalation and the downward movement of exhalation will become clear. Then make a mental note, *rising* for the upward movement, *falling* for the downward movement. Your mental note of each movement must be made while it occurs. From this exercise you learn the actual manner of the upward and downward movements of the abdomen. You are not concerned with the form of the abdomen. What you actually perceive is the bodily sensation of pressure caused by the heaving movement of the abdomen. So do not dwell on the form of the abdomen but proceed with the exercise. For the beginner it is a very effective method of developing the faculties of attention, concentration of mind and insight in contemplation. As practice increases, the manner of movement will be clearer. The ability to know each successive occurrence of the mental and physical processes at each of the six sense organs is acquired only when insight contemplation is fully developed. Since you are a beginner whose attentiveness and power of concentration are still weak, you may find it difficult to keep the mind on each successive rising movement and falling movement as it occurs. In view of this difficulty, you may be inclined to think: "I just don't know how to keep my mind on each of these movements." Then simply remember that this is a learning process. The rising and falling movements of the abdomen are always present, and therefore there is no need to look for them. Actually it is easy for a beginner to keep his or her mind on these two simple movements. Continue with this exercise in full awareness of the abdomen's rising and falling movements. Never verbally repeat the words *rising*, *falling*, and

do not think of *rising* and *falling* as words. *Be aware only of the actual process of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen.* Avoid deep or rapid breathing for the purpose of making the abdominal movements more distinct, because this procedure causes fatigue that interferes with the practice. Just be totally aware of the movements of rising and falling as they occur in the course of normal breathing.



Basic Exercise II

While occupied with the exercise of observing each of the abdominal movements, other mental activities may occur between the noting of each rising and falling. Thoughts or other mental functions, such as intentions, ideas, imaginings, are likely to occur between each mental note of rising and falling. They cannot be disregarded. A mental note must be made of each as it occurs.

If you imagine something, you must know that you have done so and make a mental note *imagining*. If you simply think of something, mentally note *thinking*. If you reflect, *reflecting*. If you intend to do something, *intending*. When the mind wanders from the object of meditation which is the rising and falling of the abdomen, mentally note *wandering*. Should you imagine you are going to a certain place, mentally note *going*. When you arrive, *arriving*. When, in your thoughts, you meet a person, note *meeting*. Should you speak to him or her, *speaking*. If you imaginatively argue with that person, *arguing*. If you envision and imagine a light or color, be sure to note *seeing*. A mental vision must be noted on each occurrence of its appearance until it passes away. After its disappearance, continue with the Basic Exercise I by knowing, by being fully aware of each movement of the rising and falling abdomen. Proceed carefully, without slackening. If you intend to swallow saliva while thus engaged, make a mental note *intending*. While in the act of swallowing, *swallowing*. If you intend to spit, *spitting*. Then return to the exercise of rising and falling. Suppose you intend to bend the neck, *intending*. In the act of bending, *bending*. When you intend to straighten the neck, *intending*. In the act of straightening the neck, *straightening*. The neck movements of bending and straightening must be done slowly. After mentally making a note of each of these actions, proceed in full awareness with noticing the movements of the rising and falling abdomen.

Basic Exercise III

Since you must continue contemplating for a long time while in one position, that of sitting or lying down, you are likely to experience an intense feeling of fatigue, stiffness in the body or in the arms and legs. Should this happen, simply keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where such feeling occurs and carry on the contemplation, noting *tired* or *stiff*. Do this naturally, that is, neither too fast nor too slow. These feelings gradually become fainter and finally cease altogether. Should one of these feelings become more intense until the bodily fatigue or stiffness of joints is unbearable, then change your position. However, do not forget to make a mental note of *intending*, before you proceed to change position. Each detailed movement must be contemplated in its respective order.

If you intend to lift the hand or leg, make a mental note, *intending*. In the act of lifting the hand or leg, *lifting*. Stretching either the hand or leg, *stretching*. When you bend, *bending*. When putting down, *putting*. Should either the hand or leg touch, *touching*. Perform all these actions in a slow deliberate manner. As soon as you are settled in the new position, continue with the contemplation of the abdominal movements. If you become uncomfortably warm in the new position resume contemplation in another position keeping to the procedure as described in this paragraph.

Should an itching sensation be felt in any part of the body, keep the mind on that part and make a mental note, *itching*. Do this in a regulated manner, neither too fast nor too slow. When the itching sensation disappears in the course of full awareness, continue with the exercise of noticing the rising and falling of the abdomen. Should the itching continue and become too strong and you intend to rub the itching part, be sure to make a mental note, *intending*. Slowly lift the hand, simultaneously noting the action of *lifting*, and *touching* when the hand touches the part that itches. Rub slowly in complete

awareness of *rubbing*. When the itching sensation has disappeared and you intend to discontinue the rubbing, be mindful by making the usual mental note of *intending*. Slowly withdraw the hand, concurrently making a mental note of the action, *withdrawing*. When the hand rests in its usual place touching the leg, *touching*. Then again devote your time to observing the abdominal movements.

If there is pain or discomfort, keep the knowing mind on that part of the body where the sensation arises. Make a mental note of the specific sensation as it occurs, such as *painful, aching, pressing, piercing, tired, giddy*. It must be stressed that the mental note must not be forced nor delayed but made in a calm and natural manner. The pain may eventually cease or increase. Do not be alarmed if it increases. Firmly continue the contemplation. If you do so, you will find that the pain will almost always cease. But if, after a time, the pain has increased and becomes almost unbearable, you must ignore the pain and continue with the contemplation of rising and falling.

As you progress in mindfulness you may experience sensations of intense pain: stifling or choking sensations, such as pain from the slash of a knife, the thrust of a sharp-pointed instrument, unpleasant sensations of being pricked by sharp needles, or small insects crawling over the body. You might experience sensations of itching, biting, intense cold. As soon as you discontinue the contemplation you may also feel that these painful sensations cease. When you resume contemplation you will have them again as soon as you gain in mindfulness. These painful sensations are not to be considered as something serious. They are not manifestations of disease but are common factors always present in the body and are usually obscured when the mind is normally occupied with more conspicuous objects. When the mental faculties become keener you are more aware of these sensations. With the continued development of contemplation the time will arrive when you can overcome them and they cease altogether. If you continue contemplation, firm in purpose, you will not come to any harm. Should

you lose courage, become irresolute in contemplation and discontinue for a time, you may encounter these unpleasant sensations again and again as your contemplation proceeds. If you continue with determination you will most likely overcome these painful sensations and may never again experience them in the course of contemplation.

Should you intend to sway the body, then knowingly note *intending.* While in the act of swaying, *swaying.* When contemplating you may occasionally discover the body swaying back and forth. Do not be alarmed; neither be pleased nor wish to continue to sway. The swaying will cease if you keep the knowing mind on the action of swaying and continue to note *swaying* until the action ceases. If swaying increases in spite of your making a mental note of it, then lean against a wall or post or lie down for a while. Thereafter proceed with contemplation. Follow the same procedure if you find yourself shaking or trembling. When contemplation is developed you may sometimes feel a thrill or chill pass through the back or the entire body. This is a symptom of the feeling of intense interest, enthusiasm or rapture. It occurs naturally in the course of good contemplation. When your mind is fixed in contemplation you may be startled at the slightest sound. This takes place because you feel more intensely the effect of sensorial impression while in the state of good concentration.

If you are thirsty while contemplating, notice the feeling, *thirsty.* When you intend to stand, *intending.* Then make a mental note of each movement in preparation for standing. Keep the mind intently on the act of standing up, and mentally note, *standing.* When you look forward after standing up straight, note *looking, seeing.* Should you intend to walk forward, *intending.* When you begin to step forward, mentally note each step as *walking, walking* or *left, right.* It is important for you to be aware of every moment in each step from beginning to end when you walk. Adhere to the same procedure when strolling or when taking a walking exercise. Try to make a

mental note of each step in two sections as follows: *lifting, putting; lifting, putting.* When you have obtained sufficient practice in this manner of walking, then try to make a mental note of each step in three sections: *lifting, pushing, putting;* or *up, forward, down.*

When you look at the water faucet, or water pot, on arriving at the place where you are to take a drink, be sure to make a mental note *looking, seeing.*

When you stop walking, *stopping.*
When you stretch the hand, *stretching.*
When the hand touches the cup, *touching.*
When the hand takes the cup, *taking.*
When the hand dips the cup into the water, *dipping.*
When the hand brings the cup to the lips, *bringing.*
When the cup touches the lips, *touching.*
Should you feel cold at the touch, *cold.*
When you swallow, *swallowing.*
When returning the cup, *returning.*
Withdrawing the hand, *withdrawing.*
When you bring down your hand, *bringing.*
When the hand touches the side of the body, *touching.*
If you intend to turn back, *intending.*
When you turn around, *turning.*
When you walk forward, *walking.*
On arriving at the place where you intend to stop, *intending.*
When you stop, *stopping.*

If you remain standing for some time continue the contemplation of rising and falling. But if you intend to sit down, *intending.* When you go forward to sit down, *walking.* On arriving at the place where you will sit, *arriving.* When you turn to sit, *turning.* While in the act of sitting, *sitting.* Sit down slowly, and keep the mind on the downward movement of the body. You must notice every movement in bringing hands and legs into position. Then resume the prescribed exercise of contemplating the abdominal movements.

Should you intend to lie down, *intending.* Then pro-

ceed with the contemplation of every movement in the course of lying down: *lifting, stretching, leaving, touching, lying.* Then make as the object of contemplation every movement in bringing hands, legs, and body into position. Perform these actions slowly. Thereafter continue with rising and falling. Should pain, fatigue, itching, or any other sensation be felt, be sure to notice each of these sensations. Notice all feelings, thoughts, ideas, considerations, reflections, all movements of hands, legs, arms and body. If there is nothing in particular to note, put the mind on rising and falling of the abdomen. Make a mental note of *drowsy*, when drowsy, and *sleepy*, when sleepy. After you have gained sufficient concentration in contemplating you will be able to overcome drowsiness and sleepiness and feel refreshed as a result. Take up again the usual contemplation of the basic object. Suppose you are unable to overcome a drowsy feeling; you must then continue to contemplate until you fall asleep.

The state of sleep is the continuity of subconsciousness. It is similar to the first state of rebirth consciousness and the last state of consciousness at the moment of death. This state of consciousness is feeble and therefore unable to be aware of an object. When you are awake the continuity of subconsciousness occurs regularly between moments of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking. Because these occurrences are of brief duration they are usually not clear and therefore not noticeable. Continuity of subconsciousness remains during sleep—a fact which becomes obvious when you wake up; for it is in the state of wakefulness that thoughts and dense objects become distinct.

Contemplation should start at the moment you wake up. Since you are a beginner, it may not yet be possible for you to start contemplating at the very first moment of wakefulness. But you should start with it from the moment when you remember that you are to contemplate. For example, if on awakening you reflect on something, you should become aware of that fact and begin your contemplation by a mental note, *reflecting.* Then

proceed with the contemplation of rising and falling. When getting up from the bed, mindfulness should be directed to every detail of the body's activity. Each movement of the hands, legs and rump must be performed in complete awareness. Are you thinking of the time of the day when awakening? If so, note *thinking*. Do you intend to get out of bed? If so, note *intending*. If you prepare to move the body into position for rising, note *preparing*. As you slowly rise, *rising*. When you are in the sitting position, *sitting*. Should you remain sitting for any length of time, revert to contemplating the abdominal movements of rising and falling.

Perform the acts of washing the face or taking a bath in their order and in complete awareness of every detailed movement; for instance, *looking, seeing, stretching, holding, touching, feeling cold, rubbing*. In the acts of dressing, making the bed, opening and closing doors and windows, handling objects, be occupied with every detail of these actions in their order.

You must attend to the contemplation of every detail in the action of eating:

When you look at the food, *looking, seeing*.
When you arrange the food, *arranging*.
When you bring the food to mouth, *bringing*.
When you bend the neck forward, *bending*.
When the food touches the mouth, *touching*.
When placing the food in the mouth, *placing*.
When the mouth closes, *closing*.
When withdrawing the hand, *withdrawing*.
Should the hand touch the plate, *touching*.
When straightening the neck, *straightening*.
When in the act of chewing, *chewing*.
When you are aware of the taste, *knowing*.
When swallowing the food, *swallowing*.
While swallowing, should the food be felt touching the sides of the gullet, *touching*.

Perform contemplation in this manner each time you partake of a morsel of food until you finish the meal. In

the beginning of the practice there will be many omissions. Never mind. Do not waver in your effort. You will make fewer omissions if you persist in your practice. When you reach an advanced stage of the practice, you will also be able to notice more details than those mentioned here.

Advancement in Contemplation

After having practiced for a day and night you may find your contemplation considerably improved and that you are able to prolong the basic exercise of noticing the abdominal rising and falling. At this time you will notice that there is generally a break between the movements of rising and falling. If you are in the sitting posture fill in this pause with a mental note on the act of sitting, in this way: *rising, falling, sitting.* When you make a mental note of sitting, keep your mind on the erect position of the upper body. When you are lying down you should proceed with full awareness as follows: *rising, falling, lying.* If you find this easy, continue with noticing these three sections. Should you notice that a pause occurs at the end of the rising as well as the falling movement, then continue in this manner: *rising, sitting, falling, sitting.* Or when lying down: *rising, lying, falling, lying.* Suppose you no longer find it easy to make a mental note of three or four objects in the above manner. Then revert to the initial procedure of noting only the two sections, *rising* and *falling.*

While engaged in the regular practice of contemplating bodily movements you need not be concerned with objects of seeing and hearing. As long as you are able to keep your mind on the abdominal movements of rising and falling it is assumed that the purpose of noticing the acts and objects of seeing and hearing is also served. However, you may intentionally look at an object, then simultaneously make a mental note, two or three times, *seeing.* Thereafter return to the awareness of the abdominal movements. Suppose some person comes into your view. Make a mental note of *seeing,* two or three times,

and then resume attention to the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. Did you happen to hear the sound of a voice? Did you listen to it? If so make the mental note of *hearing, listening,* and having done so, revert to *rising* and *falling.* But suppose you heard loud sounds, such as the barking of dogs, loud talking or singing. If so, immediately make a mental note two or three times, *hearing.* Then return to your basic exercise of attending to *rising* and *falling.* If you fail to note and dismiss such distinctive sights and sounds as they occur, you may inadvertently fall into reflections about them instead of proceeding with intense attention to rising and falling, which may then become less distinct and clear. It is by such weakened attention that mind-defiling passions breed and multiply. If such reflections do occur, make two or three times the mental note, *reflecting,* and again take up the contemplation of rising and falling. Should you forget to make a mental note of body, leg or arm movements, then mentally note *forgetting,* and resume your usual contemplation of the abdominal movements. You may feel at times that breathing is slow or that the rising and falling movements of the abdomen are not clearly perceived. When this happens, and you are in the sitting position, simply carry on the attention to *sitting, touching;* if you are lying down, *lying, touching.* While contemplating *touching,* your mind should not be kept on the same part of the body but on different parts successively. There are several places of touch and at least six or seven should be contemplated.[4]

Basic Exercise IV

Up to this point you have devoted quite some time to the training course. You might begin to feel lazy after deciding that you have made inadequate progress. By no means give up. Simply note the fact, *lazy*. Before you gain sufficient strength in attention, concentration and insight, you may doubt the correctness or usefulness of this method of training. In such a circumstance turn to contemplation of the thought, *doubtful*. Do you anticipate or wish for good results? If so, make such thoughts the subject of your contemplation, *anticipating* or *wishing*. Are you attempting to recall the manner in which this training was conducted up to this point? Yes? Then take up contemplation on *recollecting*. Are there occasions when you examine the object of contemplation to determine whether it is mind or matter? If so, then be aware of *examining*. Do you regret that there is no improvement in your contemplation? If so, then attend to that feeling of *regret*. Conversely, are you happy that your contemplation is improving? If you are, then contemplate the feeling of being *happy*. This is the way in which you make a mental note of every item of mental behavior as it occurs, and if there are no intervening thoughts or perceptions to note, you should revert to the contemplation of rising and falling. During a strict course of meditation, the time of practice is from the first moment you wake up until you fall asleep. To repeat, you must be constantly occupied either with the basic exercise or with mindful attention throughout the day and during those night hours when you are not asleep. There must be no relaxation. Upon reaching a certain stage of progress in contemplation you will not feel sleepy in spite of these prolonged hours of practice. On the contrary, you will be able to continue the contemplation day and night.

Summary

It has been emphasized during this brief outline of the

training that you must contemplate on each mental occurrence good or bad, on each bodily movement large or small, on every sensation (bodily or mental feeling) pleasant or unpleasant, and so on. If, during the course of training, occasions arise when there is nothing special to contemplate upon, be fully occupied with attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen. When you have to attend to any kind of activity that necessitates walking, then, in complete awareness, each step should be briefly noted as *walking, walking* or *left, right.* But when you are taking a walking exercise, contemplate each step in three sections, *up, forward, down.* The student who thus dedicates himself to the training during day and night, will be able in not too long a time to develop concentration to the initial stage of the fourth degree of insight (knowledge of arising and passing away)[5] and onward to higher stages of insight meditation *(vipassanā-bhāvanā).*

PART II

Progressive Practice

When as mentioned above, by dint of diligent practice, mindfulness and concentration have improved, the meditator will notice the pairwise occurrence of an object and the knowing of it, such as the rising and awareness of it, the falling and awareness of it, sitting and awareness of it, bending and awareness of it, stretching and awareness of it, lifting and awareness of it, putting down and awareness of it. Through concentrated attention (mindfulness) he knows how to distinguish each bodily and mental process: "The rising movement is one process; the knowing of it is another." He realizes that each act of knowing has the nature of "going towards an object." Such a realization refers to the characteristic function of the mind as inclining towards an object, or cognizing an object. One should know that the more clearly a material object is noticed, the clearer becomes the mental process of knowing it. This fact is stated thus in the *Visuddhi Magga:*

> For in proportion as materiality becomes quite definite, disentangled and quite clear to him, so the immaterial states that have that materiality as their object become plain of themselves too" *(The Path of Purification*, translated by Bhikkhu Manamoli).

When the meditator comes to know the difference between a bodily process and a mental process, should he be a simple man, he would reflect from direct experience thus: "There is the rising and knowing it; the falling and knowing it, and so on and so forth. There is nothing else

besides them. The words 'man' or 'woman' refer to the same process; there is no 'person' or 'soul'." Should he be a well-informed man, he would reflect from direct knowledge of the difference between a material process as object and a mental process of knowing it, thus: "It is true that there are only body and mind. Besides them there are none such entities as man or woman. While contemplating one notices a material process as object and a mental process of knowing it; and it is to that pair alone that the terms of conventional usage 'being,' 'person' or 'soul,' 'man' or 'woman' refer. But apart from that dual process there is no separate person or being, I or another, man or woman." When such reflections occur, the meditator must note "reflecting, reflecting" and go on observing the rising of the abdomen, and its falling.[6]

With further progress in meditation, the conscious state of an intention is evident before a bodily movement occurs. The meditator first notices that intention. Though also at the start of his practice, he does notice "intending, intending" (for instance, to bend an arm), yet he cannot notice that state of consciousness distinctly. Now, at this more advanced stage, he clearly notices the consciousness consisting of the intention to bend. So he notices first the conscious state of an intention to make a bodily movement; then he notices the particular bodily movement. At the beginning, because of omission to notice an intention, he thinks that bodily movement is quicker than the mind knowing it. Now, at this advanced stage, mind appears to be the forerunner. The meditator readily notices the intention of bending, stretching, sitting, standing, going, and so on. He also clearly notices the actual bending, stretching, etc. So he realizes the fact that mind knowing a bodily process is quicker than the material process. He experiences directly that a bodily process takes place after a preceding intention. Again he knows from direct experience that the intensity of heat or cold increases while he is noticing "hot, hot" or "cold, cold." In contemplating regular and spontaneous bodily movements such as the rising and falling of the abdomen,

he notices one after another continuously. He also notices the arising in him of mental images such as the Buddha, an *arahat*, as well as any kind of sensation that arises in his body (such as itch, ache, heat), with attention directed on the particular spot where the sensation occurs. One sensation has hardly disappeared, then another arises, and he notices them all accordingly. While noticing every object as it arises he is aware that a mental process of knowing depends on an object. Sometimes, the rising and falling of the abdomen is so faint that he finds nothing to notice. Then, it occurs to him that there can be no knowing without an object. When no noticing of the rising and falling is possible one should be aware of sitting and touching or lying and touching. Touching is to be noticed alternatively. For example, after noticing "sitting," notice the touch sensation at the right foot (caused by its contact with the ground or seat). Then, after noticing "sitting," notice the touch sensation at the left foot. In the same manner, notice the touch sensation at several places. Again, in noticing seeing, hearing, the meditator comes to know clearly that seeing arises from the contact of eye and visual object and hearing arises from the contact of ear and sound.

Further he reflects: "Material processes of bending, stretching and so on, follow mental processes of intending to bend, stretch and so forth." He goes on to reflect: "One's body becomes hot or cold because of the element of heat or cold; the body exists on food and nourishment; consciousness arises because there are objects to notice: seeing arises through visual objects; hearing through sounds, and also because there are the sense organs, eye, ear, etc., as conditioning factors. Intention and noticing result from previous experiences; feelings (sensations) of all kinds are the consequences of previous *karma* in the sense that material processes and mental processes take place ever since birth because of previous *karma*. There is nobody to create this body and mind, and all that happens has causal factors." Such reflections come to the meditator while he is noticing any object as

it arises. He does not stop doing so to take time to reflect. While noticing objects as they arise these reflections are so quick that they appear to be automatic. The meditator, then, must note: "Reflecting, reflecting, recognizing, recognizing," and continue noticing objects as usual. After having reflected that material processes and mental processes being noticed are conditioned by the previous processes of the same nature, the meditator reflects further that body and mind in the former existences were conditioned by the preceding causes, that in the following existences body and mind will result from the same causes, and apart from this dual process there is no separate "being" or "person," only causes and effects taking place. Such reflections must also be noticed and then contemplation should go on as usual.[7] Such reflections will be many in the case of persons with a strong intellectual bent and less in the case of those with no such bent. Be that as it may, energetic noticing must be made of all these reflections. Noticing them will result in their reduction to a minimum, allowing insight to progress unimpeded by an excess of such reflections. It should be taken for granted that a minimum of reflections will suffice here.

When concentration is practiced in an intensive manner, the meditator may experience almost unbearable sensations, such as itching, aches, heat, dullness and stiffness. If mindful noticing is stopped, such sensations will disappear. When noticing is resumed, they will reappear. Such sensations arise in consequence of the body's natural sensitivity and are not the symptoms of a disease. If they are noticed with energetic concentration they fade away gradually.

Again, the meditator sometimes sees images of all kinds as if seeing them with his own eyes; for example, the Buddha comes into the scene in glorious radiance; a procession of monks in the sky; pagodas *(dagobas)* and images of the Buddha; meeting with beloved ones; trees or woods, hills or mountains, gardens, buildings; finding oneself face to face with bloated dead bodies or skele-

tons; swelling of one's body, covered with blood, falling into pieces and reduced to a mere skeleton, seeing in one's body the entrails and vital organs and even germs; seeing the denizens of the hells and heavens. These are nothing but creatures of one's imagination sharpened by intense concentration. They are similar to what one comes across in dreams. They are not to be welcomed and enjoyed, nor need one be afraid of them. These objects seen in the course of contemplation are not real; they are mere images or imaginations, whereas the mind that sees those objects is a reality. But purely mental processes, unconnected with fivefold sense impressions, cannot easily be noticed with sufficient clarity and detail. Hence principal attention should be given to sense objects which can be noticed easily, and to those mental processes which arise in connection with sense perceptions. So whatever object appears, the meditator shall notice it, saying mentally, "seeing, seeing" until it disappears. It will either move away, fade away or break asunder. At the outset, this will take several noticings, say about five to ten. But when insight develops, the object will disappear after a couple of noticings. However, if the meditator wishes to enjoy the sight, or to look closely into the matter, or gets scared of it, then it is likely to linger on. If the object be one induced deliberately, then through delight it will last a long time. So care must be taken not to think of or incline towards extraneous matters while one's concentration is good. If such thoughts come in, they must be instantly noticed and dispelled. In the case of some persons they experience no extraordinary objects or feelings and, while contemplating as usual, become lazy. They must notice this laziness thus: "lazy, lazy," until they overcome it. At this stage, whether or not the meditators come across extraordinary objects or feelings they know clearly the initial, the intermediate and the final phases of every noticing. At the beginning of the practice, while noticing one object, they had to switch onto a different object that arose, but they did not notice clearly the disappearance of the previous object. Now,

only after cognizing the disappearance of an object, they notice the new object that arises. Thus they have a clear knowledge of the initial, the intermediate and the final phases of the object noticed.

At this stage when the meditator becomes more practiced he perceives in every act of noticing that an object appears suddenly and disappears instantly. His perception is so clear that he reflects thus: "All comes to an end; all disappears. Nothing is permanent; it is truly impermanent." His reflection is quite in line with what is stated in the Commentary to the Pali Text: "All is impermanent, in the sense of destruction, nonexistence after having been." He reflects further: "It is through ignorance that we enjoy life. But in truth, there is nothing to enjoy. There is a continuous arising and disappearing by which we are harassed ever and anon. This is dreadful indeed. At any moment we may die and everything is sure to come to an end. This universal impermanence is truly frightful and terrible." His reflection agrees with the commentarial statement: "What is impermanent is painful, painful in the sense of terror; painful because of oppression by rise and fall." Again, experiencing severe pains he reflects thus: "All is pain, all is bad." This reflection agrees with what the Commentary states: "He looks on pain as a barb; as a boil; as a dart." He further reflects: "This is a mass of suffering, suffering that is unavoidable. Arising and disappearing, it is worthless. One cannot stop its process. It is beyond one's power. It takes its natural course." This reflection is quite in agreement with the Commentary; "What is painful is not self, not self in the sense of having no core, because there is no exercising of power over it." The meditator must notice all these reflections and go on contemplating as usual.

Having thus seen the three characteristics by direct experience, the meditator, by inference from the direct experience of the objects noticed, comprehends all the objects not yet noticed as being impermanent, subject to suffering, and without a self.

In respect of objects not personally experienced, he

concludes: "They too are constituted in the same way: impermanent, painful and without a self." This is an inference from his present direct experience. Such a comprehension is not clear enough in the case of one with less intellectual capacity or limited knowledge who pays no attention to a reflection but simply goes on noticing objects. But such a comprehension occurs often to one who yields to reflection, which, in some cases, may occur at every act of noticing. Such excessive reflecting, however, is an impediment to the progress of insight. Even if no such reflections occur at this stage, comprehension will nevertheless become increasingly clear at the higher stages. Hence, no attention should be given to reflections. While giving more attention to the bare noticing of objects, the meditator must, however, also notice these reflections if they occur, but he should not dwell on them.[8]

After comprehending the three characteristics, the meditator no longer reflects but goes on with noticing those bodily and mental objects which present themselves continuously. Then at the moment when the five mental faculties, namely, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and knowledge, are properly balanced, the mental process of noticing accelerates as if it becomes uplifted, and the bodily and mental processes to be noticed also arise much quicker. In a moment of in-breathing the rising of the abdomen presents itself in quick succession, and the falling also becomes correspondingly quicker. Quick succession is also evident in the process of bending and stretching. Slight movements are felt spreading all over the body. In several cases, prickly sensations and itching appear in quick succession momentarily. By and large, these are feelings hard to bear. The meditator cannot possibly keep pace with that quick succession of varied experiences if he attempts to notice them by name. Noticing has here to be done in a general manner, but with mindfulness. At this stage one need not try to notice details of the objects arising in quick succession, but one should notice them generally. If one wishes to

name them, a collective designation will be sufficient. If one attempts to follow them in a detailed manner, one will get tired soon. The important thing is to notice clearly and to comprehend what arises. At this stage, the usual contemplation focused on a few selected objects should be set aside and mindful noticing should attend to every object that arises at the six sense doors. Only when one is not keen on this sort of noticing, then one should revert to the usual contemplation.

Bodily and mental processes are many times swifter than a wink of an eye or a flash of lightning. Yet, if the meditator goes on simply noticing these processes he can fully comprehend them as they happen. Then mindfulness becomes very strong. As a result, mindfulness seems as if plunging into an object that arises. The object too seems as if alighting on mindfulness. One comprehends each object clearly and singly. Therefore the meditator then believes: "Bodily and mental processes are very swift indeed. They are as fast as a machine or an engine. And yet, they all can be noticed and comprehended. Perhaps there is nothing more to know. What is to be known has been known." He believes so because he knows by direct experience what he has not even dreamt of before.

Again, as a result of insight, a brilliant light will appear to the meditator. There arises also in him rapture, causing "goose flesh," falling of tears, tremor in the limbs. It produces in him a subtle thrill and exhilaration. He feels as if on a swing. He even wonders whether he is just giddy. Then, there arises tranquility of mind and along with it appears mental agility. When sitting, lying, walking or standing, he feels quite at ease. Both body and mind are agile in functioning swiftly, they are pliant in being able to attend to any object desired; they are wieldy in being able to attend to an object for any length of time desired. One is free from stiffness, heat or pain. Insight penetrates objects with ease. Mind becomes sound and straight, and one wishes to avoid all evil. Through firm faith, mind is very bright. At times, when there is no

object to be noticed, the mind remains tranquil for a long time. There arise in him thoughts like these: "Verily, the Buddha is omniscient. Truly, the body-and-mind process is impermanent, painful and without self." While noticing objects he comprehends lucidly the three characteristics. He wishes to advise others to practice meditation. Free from sloth and torpor, his energy is neither lax nor tense. There also arises in him equanimity associated with insight. His happiness exceeds his former experiences. So he wishes to communicate his feelings and experiences to others. There arises further a subtle attachment of a calm nature that enjoys the insight associated with the brilliant light, mindfulness and rapture. He comes to believe it to be just the bliss of meditation.

The meditator should not reflect on these happenings. As each arises, he should notice them accordingly: "Brilliant light, faith, rapture, tranquility, happiness and so on."[9] When there is brightness, one should notice it as "bright," until it disappears. Similar acts of noticing should be made in the other cases too. When brilliant light appears, at the beginning one tends to forget noticing and enjoys seeing the light. Even if the meditator applies mindful noticing to the light, it will be mixed with feelings of rapture and happiness, and it is likely to linger on. However, one later gets used to such phenomena and one will continue to notice them clearly until they disappear. Sometimes the light is so brilliant that one finds it difficult to make it vanish by the mere act of noticing it mindfully. Then one should cease to pay attention to it and turn energetically to the noticing of any object that arises in one's body. The meditator should not ponder as to whether the light is still there. If he does so, he is likely to see it. If such a thought arises, he should disperse it by vigorously directing his attention to that very thought. While concentration is intense, not only a brilliant light but also several other extraordinary objects arise and may continue if one inclines to one or the other of them. If such inclination happens to arise, the meditator must notice it quickly. In some cases, even

if there is no such inclination towards any object in particular, faint objects appear one after the other like a train of railway carriages. The meditator should then respond to such visual images simply by "seeing, seeing," and each object will disappear. When the meditator's insight becomes weaker, the objects may become more distinct. Then, each of them must be noticed until the whole train of objects disappears finally.

One must recognize the fact that cherishing an inclination towards such phenomena as a brilliant light, and being attached to them, is a wrong attitude. The correct response that is in conformity with the path of insight is to notice these objects mindfully and with detachment until they disappear.[10] When the meditator continues to apply mindfulness to body-and-mind, his insight will grow in clarity. He will come to perceive more distinctly the arising and disappearing of the bodily and mental processes. He will come to know that each object arises at one place and on the very place it disappears. He will know that the previous occurrence is one thing and the succeeding occurrence is another. So, at every act of noticing, he comprehends the characteristics of impermanence, painfulness and egolessness. After thus contemplating for a considerable time, he may come to believe: "This is surely the best that can be attained. It can't be better." He becomes so satisfied with his progress that he is likely to pause and relax. He should, however, not relax at this stage, but go ahead with his practice of noticing the bodily and mental processes continuously for a still longer time.[11]

With the improvement of practice and when knowledge becomes more mature, the arising of the objects is no longer apparent to the meditator; he notices only their ceasing. They pass away swiftly. So also do the mental processes of noticing them. For instance, while noticing the rising of the abdomen, that movement vanishes in no time. And in the same manner vanishes the mental process of noticing that movement. Thus it will be clearly known to the meditator that both the rising and the

noticing vanish immediately, one after another. The same applies in the case of the falling of the abdomen, of sitting, bending or stretching of an arm or leg, stiffness in the limbs, and so on. The noticing of an object and the knowledge of its ceasing occur in quick succession. Some meditators perceive distinctly three phases: noticing an object, its ceasing, and the passing away of the consciousness that cognizes that ceasing—all in quick succession. However, it is sufficient to know, in pairwise sequence, the dissolution of an object and the passing away of the consciousness of noticing that dissolution.

When a meditator can clearly notice these pairs uninterruptedly, the particular features such as body, head, hand, leg are no longer apparent to him, and there appears to him the idea that everything is ceasing and vanishing. At this stage he is likely to feel that his contemplation is not up to the mark. But in fact, it is not so. Mind as a rule takes delight in dwelling on the sight of particular features and forms. Because of their absence, mind is wanting in satisfaction. As a matter of fact, it is the manifestation of the progress of insight. At the beginning, it is features that are clearly noticed first, but now their ceasing is noticed first, because of the progress. Only on repeated reflection, features appear again, but if they are not noticed the fact of dissolution reappears to remain. So one comes to know by direct experience the truth of the wise saying: "When a name or designation arises, a reality lies hidden; when a reality reveals itself, a name or designation disappears."

When the meditator notices the objects clearly, he thinks that his noticings are not close enough. In fact, the insight is so swift and clear that he comes to know even the momentary subconsciousness in between the processes of cognition. He intends to do something, for instance, bending or stretching an arm, and he readily notices that intention which thereby tends to fade away, with the result that he cannot bend or stretch for some time. In that event, he should switch his attention to contemplating the occurrences at one of the six sense

doors.

If the meditator extends his contemplation over the whole body, as usual, beginning with the noticing of the rising and the falling of the abdomen, he will soon gain momentum, and then he should continue noticing touching and knowing, or seeing and knowing, or hearing and knowing and so on, as one or the other occurs. While so doing, if he feels that he is either restless or tired, then he should revert to noticing the rising and falling of the abdomen. After some time, when he gains momentum, he should notice any object that arises in the whole body.

When he can contemplate well in such a spread out manner, even if he does not notice an object with vigor, he knows what he hears fades away, what he sees dissolves in broken parts, with no continuation between them. This is seeing things as they really are. Some meditators do not see clearly what is happening because the vanishing is so swift that they feel their eyesight is getting poorer or they are giddy. It is not so. They are simply lacking the power of cognition to notice what happens before and after, with the result that they do not see the features or forms. At such a time, they should relax and stop contemplating. But the bodily and mental processes continue to appear to them, and consciousness, of its own accord, continues to notice them. The meditator may decide to sleep, but he does not fall asleep; and yet he remains fit and alert. He need not worry about the loss of sleep, because on this account he will not feel unwell or fall ill. He should go ahead with noticing energetically and he will feel that his mind is quite capable to perceive the objects fully and clearly.

When engaged in noticing continuously both the dissolution of the objects and the act of knowing it, he reflects: "Even for the wink of an eye or a flash of lightning nothing lasts. One did not realize this before. As it ceased and vanished in the past so will it cease and vanish in the future." One must notice such a reflection.[12] Besides, in the midst of contemplations, the meditator is likely to have an awareness of fearfulness. He

reflects: "One enjoys life, not knowing the truth. Now that one knows the truth of continuous dissolution it is truly fearful. At every moment of dissolution one can die. The beginning of this life itself is fearful. So are the endless repetitions of the arisings. Fearful it is to feel that in the absence of real features and forms the arisings appear to be real. So are the efforts to arrest the changing phenomena for the sake of well-being and happiness. To be reborn is fearful in that it will be a recurrence of objects that are ceasing and vanishing always. Fearful indeed it is to be old, to die, to experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair." Such reflection should be noticed and then dismissed.

Then the meditator sees nothing to depend on and becomes as it were weakened in mind as well as in body. He is seized with dejection. He is no longer bright and spirited. But he should not despair. This condition of his is a sign of the progress of insight. It is nothing more than being unhappy at the awareness of fearfulness. He must notice such a reflection and as he continues to notice objects as they arise, one after another, this unhappy feeling will disappear soon. However, if he fails to contemplate for some time, then grief will assert itself and fear will overpower him. This kind of fear is not associated with insight. Therefore, care must be taken to prevent the oncoming of such undesirable fear by energetic contemplation.[13]

Again in the midst of noticing objects, he is likely to find faults, in this manner: "This body-and-mind process, being impermanent, is unsatisfactory. It was not a good thing to have been born. It is not good either to continue in existence. It is disappointing to see the appearance of seemingly definite features and forms of objects while in fact they are not realities. It is in vain that one makes efforts to seek well-being and happiness. Birth is not desirable. Dreadful are old age, death, lamentation, pain, grief and despair." A reflection of this nature must likewise be noticed.[14]

Then, one tends to feel that body-and-mind as the

object and the consciousness of noticing it are very crude, low or worthless. By noticing their arising and disappearing he gets sick of them. He might see his own body decaying and decomposing. He looks upon it as being very fragile.

At this stage, while the meditator is noticing all that arises in his body and mind he is getting disgusted with it. Although he cognizes clearly their dissolution by a series of good noticings he is no longer alert and bright. His contemplation is associated with disgust. So he becomes lazy to contemplate. But nevertheless he cannot refrain from contemplating. For example, it is like one who feels disgusted at every step when he has to walk on a muddy and dirty path and yet he cannot stop going. He cannot help but go on. At this time, he sees the human abode as being subject to the process of dissolution, and he does not relish the prospect of being reborn as a human being, man or woman, king or multimillionaire. He has the same feelings towards the celestial abodes.[15]

When through this knowledge he feels disgusted with regard to every formation noticed, there will arise in him a desire to forsake these formations or be delivered from them.[16] Seeing, hearing, touching, reflecting, standing, sitting, bending, stretching, noticing—he wishes to get rid of them all. He should notice this wishing. He now longs for the liberation from bodily and mental processes. He reflects: "Every time I notice them, I am meeting with repetitions, which are all bad. I had better stop noticing them." He should take notice of such a reflection.

Some meditators, when so reflecting, actually stop noticing the formations. Although they do so, the formations do not stop taking place, namely, rising, falling, bending, stretching, intending and so on. They go on as ever. Noticing of the distinct formations also continues. So, reflecting thus, he feels pleased: "Although I stop noticing the body-and-mind, formations are taking place all the same. They are arising, and consciousness of them is there, by itself. So liberation from them cannot be achieved by mere stopping to notice them. They cannot

be forsaken in this way. Noticing them as usual, the three characteristics of life will be fully comprehended and then no heed being given to them, equanimity will be gained. The end of these formations, *nirvana*, will be realized. Peace and bliss will come." So reflecting with delight, he continues to notice the formations. In the case of those meditators who are not capable of reflecting in this way, they continue their meditation once they become satisfied with the explanation of their teachers.

Soon after continuing meditation they gain momentum and at that time usually various painful feelings arise in some cases. This need not cause despair. It is only the manifestation of the characteristic inherent in this mass of suffering, as stated in the Commentary thus: "Seeing the five aggregates as painful, as a disease, a boil, as a dart, a calamity, an affliction, etc." If such painful feelings are not experienced, one of the forty characteristics of impermanence, suffering or no-self[17] will be apparent at every noticing. Although the meditator is properly noticing he feels that he is not doing well. He thinks that the consciousness of noticing and the object noticed are not close enough. This is because he is too eager to comprehend fully the nature of the three characteristics. Not satisfied with his contemplation he changes his posture often. While sitting, he thinks he will do better walking. While walking he wants to resume sitting. After he has sat down he changes the position of his limbs. He wants to go to another place; he wants to lie down. Although he makes these changes he cannot remain long in one particular position. Again, he becomes restless. But he should not despair. All this happens because he has come to realize the true nature of the formations, and also because he has not yet acquired the "knowledge of equanimity about formations." He is doing well and yet he feels otherwise. He should try to adhere to one posture, and he will find that he is comfortable in that posture. Continuing to notice the formations energetically, his mind will gradually become composed and bright. In the end his restless feelings will disappear

totally.[18]

When the "knowledge of equanimity about formations" becomes mature, the mind will be very clear and able to notice the formations very lucidly. Noticing runs smoothly as if no effort is required. Subtle formations, too, are noticed without effort. The true characteristics of impermanence, pain and no-self are becoming evident without any reflection. Attention is directed to a particular spot at any part of the body wherever a sensation occurs, but the feeling of touch is as smooth as that of cotton. Sometimes, the objects to be noticed in the whole body are so many that noticing has to be accelerated. Both body and mind appear to be pulling upwards. The objects being noticed become sparse and one can notice them easily and calmly. Sometimes the bodily formations disappear altogether leaving only the mental formations. Then the meditator will experience within himself a feeling of rapture as if enjoying a shower of tiny particles of water. He is also suffused with serenity. He might also see brightness like a clear sky. These marked experiences, however, do not influence him excessively. He is not overjoyed. But he still enjoys them. He must notice this enjoyment. He must also notice rapture, serenity and bright light. If they do not vanish when being noticed, he should pay no heed to them and notice any other object that arises.

At this stage he becomes satisfied with the knowledge that there is no I, mine, he or his, and that only formations arise; formations only, are cognizing formations. He also finds delight in noticing the objects one after another. He is not tired of noticing the objects one after another. He is not tired of noticing them for a long time. He is free from painful feelings. So whatever posture he chooses he can retain it long. Either sitting or lying he can go on contemplating for two or three hours without experiencing any discomfort, spending his time tirelessly. Intending to contemplate for a while, he may go on for two or three hours. Even after that time his posture is as firm as before.

At times formations arise swiftly and he is noticing them well. Then he may become anxious as to what would happen to him. He should notice such an anxiety. He feels he is doing well. He should notice this feeling. He looks forward to the progress of insight. He should notice this anticipation. He should notice steadily whatever arises. He should not put forth a special effort nor relax. In some cases, because of the anxiety, joy, attachment or anticipation, noticing becomes lax and retrogressive. Some who think that the goal is very near contemplate with great energy. While doing so, noticing becomes lax and retrogression sets in. This happens because a restless mind cannot concentrate properly on formations. So when noticing is in good swing the meditator must go on steadily; that means he should neither relax nor put forth special effort. If he does go on steadily, he will rapidly gain insight into the end of all the formations and realize *nirvana*. In the case of some meditators, they may, at this stage, rise higher and again fall several times. They should not give way to despair but instead hold fast to determination. Heed must be paid also to noticing whatever arises at all the six sense doors. However, when noticing is going on smoothly and calmly, contemplation in such a spread out manner is not possible. So this manner of noticing should begin with the gaining of the momentum in contemplation until it becomes smooth and calm.

If the meditator begins either with the rising and falling of the abdomen or with any other bodily and mental object, he will find that he is gaining momentum. And then the noticing will go on of its own accord smoothly and calmly. It will appear to him that he is watching with ease the ceasing and vanishing of the formations in a clear manner. At this point, his mind is quite free from all the defilements. However pleasant and inviting an object may be, it is no longer so to him. Again, however loathsome an object may be, it is no longer so to him. He simply sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels a touch or cognizes. With six kinds of equanimity described in the Texts he notices all the formations. He is

not even aware of the length of time he is engaged in contemplation. Nor does he reflect in any manner. But if he does not develop sufficient progress of insight to gain the "knowledge of the path and its fruition"*(magga* and *phala)* within two or three hours, concentration becomes slack and reflection sets in. On the other hand, if he is making good progress he may anticipate further advance. He will become so delighted with the result that he will experience a fall. Then he must dispel such an anticipation or reflection by directing bare noticing to it. A steady contemplation will achieve smooth progress again. But if sufficient strength of insight has not yet been achieved, concentration becomes slack again. In this way, some meditators progress and fall back several times. Those who are acquainted with the stages of the progress of insight by way of study (or by hearing about them) encounter such ups and downs. Hence it is not good for a pupil who meditates under the guidance of a teacher to get acquainted with these stages before meditation begins. But for the benefit of those who have to practice without the guidance of an experienced teacher, these stages have been indicated here.

In spite of such fluctuations in his progress the meditator must not allow himself to be overcome by disappointment or despair. He is now, as it were, at the threshold of *magga* and *phala* (the entry and the fruition of the stages of sainthood). As soon as the five faculties *(indriya)* of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom are developed in an even manner, he will soon reach *magga* and *phala* and realize *nirvana.*

How Nirvana is Realized

The ups and downs of insight knowledge occurring in the aforesaid manner are comparable to a bird let loose from a sea-going ship. In ancient times the captain of a sea-going ship, finding it difficult to know whether the ship was approaching land, released a bird that he had taken with him. The bird flies in all four directions to look for a shore. Whenever it cannot find any land, it comes back to the ship. As long as insight knowledge is not mature enough to grow into path and fruition knowledge and thereby attain to the realization of *nirvana*, it becomes lax and retarded, just as the bird returns to the ship. When the bird sees land, it flies on in that direction without returning to the ship. Similarly, when insight knowledge is mature, on having become keen, strong and lucid, it will understand one of the formations, at one of the six sense doors, as being impermanent or painful or without self. That act of noticing any one characteristic out of the three which has a higher degree of lucidity and strength in its perfect understanding, becomes faster and manifests itself three or four times in rapid succession. Immediately after the last consciousness in this series of accelerated noticing has ceased, *magga and phala* (path and fruition) arises, realizing *nirvana*, the cessation of all formations.

The acts of noticing are now more lucid than the previous ones immediately before the realization. After the last act of noticing, the cessation of the formations and realization of *nirvana* become manifest. That is why

those who have realized *nirvana* would say:

> The objects noticed and the consciousness noticing them cease altogether; or, the objects and the acts of noticing are cut off as a vine is cut by a knife; or, the objects and acts of noticing fall off as if one is relieved of a heavy load; or, the objects and acts of noticing break away as if something one is holding breaks asunder; or, the objects and acts of noticing are suddenly freed as if from a prison; or, the objects and acts of noticing are blown off as if a candle is suddenly extinguished; or, they disappear as if darkness is suddenly replaced by light; or, they are released as if freed from an embroilment; or, they sink as if in water, or abruptly stop as if a person running were stopped by a violent push; or, they cease altogether.

The duration of realizing the cessation of formations is, however, not long. It is so short that it lasts just for an instant of noticing. Then the meditator reviews what has occurred. He knows that the cessation of the material processes noticed and the mental processes noticing them is the realization of *magga-phala-nirvana.* Those who are well-informed know that the cessation of the formations is *nirvana,* and the realization of cessation and bliss is *maggaphala.* They would say inwardly: "I have now realized *nirvana* and have attained *sotāpatti maggaphala.*" Such a clear knowledge is evident to one who has studied the scriptures or heard sermons on this subject.[19]

Some meditators review defilements—those already abandoned and those remaining to be abandoned. After having reviewed in this way, they still continue the practice of noticing bodily and mental processes. While doing so, the bodily and mental processes, however, appear to be coarse. Both the arising and the passing away of the processes are clearly evident to the meditator. And yet the meditator now feels as if his noticing is lax and has regressed. As a matter of fact he has come back to the knowledge of arising and passing away. It is true, his noticing has become lax and regressed. Because he has come back to this stage, he is likely to see bright lights or shapes of objects. In some cases, this reversion results in

unbalanced contemplation in that the objects noticed and acts of noticing do not go together. Some meditators experience slight pain for a while. By and large, the meditators notice that their mental processes are clear and bright. At this stage, the meditator feels that his mind is absolutely free from any encumbrance; he feels happily unhindered. In such a frame of mind he cannot notice the mental process, and even if he does so, he cannot notice it distinctly. He cannot think of any other thing either. He simply feels bright and blissful. When this feeling loses its vigor he can again notice the bodily and mental processes and know their arising and passing away clearly. After some time he reaches the stage where he can notice the formations smoothly and calmly. Then, if the insight knowledge is mature, he can again attain to the "knowledge of the cessation of the formations." If the power of concentration is keen and firm, then such knowledge can repeat itself frequently. In these times, the object of the meditators is to attain to the knowledge of the first *magga-phala*, and consequently they regain that knowledge repeatedly. Thus far has been described the method of meditation, the progressive stages of insight knowledge and the realization of *sotāpatti magga-phala.*

One who has attained the knowledge of path and fruition is aware of the distinct change of his temperament and mental attitude and feels that his life has changed. His faith or trustful confidence in the three sacred gems becomes very strong and firm. Due to this strengthened faith he also gains in rapture and serenity. There arises in him a spontaneous upsurge of happiness. Because of these ecstatic experiences he cannot notice the objects in a distinct manner although he endeavors to do so right after the attainment of *magga-phala.* However, these experiences wane gradually after some hours or days, and he will then be able again to notice the formations distinctly. In some cases, the meditators, having attained *magga-phala*, feel relieved of a great burden, free and easy, and do not wish to go on contemplating. Their

object, the attainment of *magga-phala*, has been achieved and their hearts' content is understandable.

Fruition Knowledge (Phala-nāna) If one who has attained *magga-phala* wishes to attain the knowledge of fruition *(phala-nāna)* and *nirvana* once again, he must direct his mind towards that goal and again attend to noticing mindfully the bodily and mental processes. In the course of insight meditation it is but natural that "analytical knowledge of body and mind" appears first to a worldling *(puthujjana)* and "knowledge of arising and passing away" appears first to a noble person *(ariya)*. Therefore, a meditator at this stage, conscious of the bodily and mental processes, will forthwith achieve the "knowledge of arising and passing away," followed soon by the other progressive stages of insight, up to the "knowledge of equanimity about formations." When this knowledge matures, the cessation of formations, *nirvana*, is reached with the resultant "knowledge of fruition." This knowledge lasts just a moment to one who has not previously made a resolve on its duration; but it may sometimes last a little longer. But in the case of those who had made a prior resolve on its duration, the "knowledge of fruition" lasts longer, say the whole day or night, or as long as the time resolved, as stated in the Commentaries. Likewise, in these days, in the case of those immersed in concentration and insight, fruition lasts an hour, two hours, three hours, and so on. Fruition knowledge comes to an end only when the meditator wishes to terminate it. Nevertheless, during a period of fruition knowledge, lasting an hour or two, reflective moments sometimes arise, but they disappear after four or five noticings, and fruition knowledge recurs. In some cases, fruition knowledge lasts for several hours, without any interruption. While fruition knowledge lasts, consciousness is absolutely set upon the cessation of formations known by the designation of *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is a *dharma* entirely liberated from the bodily and mental process and all mundane notions. Therefore, during the experiencing

of fruition knowledge there arises no awareness of one's bodily and mental processes and of this world, nor of any other mundane sphere. One is absolutely free from the entire mundane sphere. One is absolutely free from all mundane knowledge and inclinations. There are around him all objects to see, hear, smell or touch, but he is not aware of them at all. His posture is firm. If bliss of fruition knowledge comes while he is sitting, his sitting posture remains firm, as firm as before, without bending or sagging. However, when the process of fruition knowledge comes to an end there arises at once in him the awareness of thoughts relating to the cessation of the formations or the objects of sight, hearing, etc. Then the normal contemplation returns or buoyant feeling or reflection. At the beginning the formations appear to him to be coarse and his noticings are not vigorous enough. But in the case of those who are strong in insight, their contemplation runs as smoothly as ever.

A note of warning may be given here. The meditator should make a prior resolve on the speedy entrance into fruition knowledge and the duration of it. He should not turn his attention to a resolve once he has started to notice the bodily and mental processes. Before the maturity of insight is achieved, while he is doing very well in noticing the formations, he may experience "goose-flesh," yawning, trembling and sobbing, and lose the momentum of contemplation. While the acts of noticing are gaining strength, he may look forward to the goal and thereby loosen the grip on his contemplation. But he should not think of anything else than his contemplation and if he does so unwittingly, he must notice the extraneous thought. Some attain to fruition knowledge only after several losses of the momentum in their acts of noticing. If one's concentration is weak, then the entry into fruition knowledge is slow, and when it comes it does not last long. This is a description of the process of fruition knowledge.

Reviewing Some of the meditators pass through the

stages of the knowledge of fearfulness, misery, disgust, desire of deliverance and consequently have no clear view of them. So, one wishing to review them should review each of them for a fixed time. For example, for half an hour or one hour one should pay heed only to the arising and passing away of the objects, with a resolve on the knowledge of arising and passing away. During that period the knowledge of arising and passing away remains intact, and there will be no further progress of insight. However, when that period expires, knowledge of dissolution arises by itself. If it does not arise by itself, then heed must be given to dissolution with a resolve that knowledge of dissolution stays on for a certain length of time. During that period what has been resolved will occur. On the expiration of the time fixed, the next higher knowledge will arise by itself. If it does not, he should aspire to the knowledge of fearfulness associated with fearful objects. Then knowledge of fearfulness will come together with fearful objects. Then he should turn his attention to miserable objects and knowledge of misery will arise very soon. When the mind is directed to disgusting objects it will give rise to knowledge of disgust. Getting disgusted with every noticing, knowledge of disgust will set in. The next stage must then be thought of: knowledge of desire for deliverance. Seized with an ardent desire to be delivered from the formations, he should aspire to the relevant knowledge, and soon that knowledge will come, after some effort. When one inclines towards the next higher stage, one will experience pains, wish to change postures and become disturbed by a feeling of dissatisfaction, but will gain knowledge of reobservation. Then, the meditator must turn his mind to the knowledge of equanimity. The momentum of contemplation will go on until there arises smoothly the knowledge of reobservation. In this way, one will find that during the stipulated time, while one is noticing, the particular knowledge one aspires to arises and on its expiration the next higher knowledge arises as if it were a barometric rise. If a review of the above-mentioned

knowledges is not yet satisfactory, it should be repeated until one is satisfied. To a very ardent meditator the progress is so very swift that he may reach the stage of knowledge of equanimity about formations in a few moments, as also the stage of fruition knowledge. One who is well matured in the practice can attain to fruition knowledge while walking or having a meal.

How to Attain to the Higher Paths (Maggas)

When the meditator gets full satisfaction from the exercises to attain speedily the fruition knowledge of the first path, as also to abide therein for a long time, he should strive to attain to a higher path. He must then make an ardent wish in this manner, having determined a definite period for striving: "During this period I do not wish to experience the fruition knowledge. May there be no recurrence of that knowledge! May I attain to the higher path, the path I have not yet attained! May I reach that goal!" With this ardent wish, he should, as usual, notice the bodily and mental processes. The advantage of the determination of a definite period is that he can easily attain again the fruition knowledge of the path already acquired, if he so wishes. If no such time limit is made, and one goes on striving to attain to the higher path, then it will no longer be possible for him to attain again the fruition knowledge of the lower path. In that event, if one finds that he cannot as yet attain to the higher path nor go back to the fruition knowledge of the lower path, he will be disturbed by a feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment. The advantage of abandoning the wish for re-attaining the already attained fruition knowledge is the nonattainment of the knowledge during the particular period, and if there is maturity of insight, one can attain to the higher path. If the wish is not fully abandoned, then the previous fruition knowledge may set in again. Therefore, full abandonment of the wish is called for during the definite period. When one begins the contemplation with a view to attaining the higher path, the progress of insight will begin with knowledge of

arising and passing away. Then the progress of insight is not similar to that one makes while striving for the recurrence of fruition knowledge, but the same as the progress one makes in practicing contemplation for the lower path. Brilliant light or shapes may appear as in the case of the earlier stage of knowledge of arising and passing away. One may experience pain. Distinct arising and passing away of the bodily and mental processes occurs. Although it does not take long to regain the "knowledge of equanimity about formations" while one is contemplating for the recurrence of fruition knowledge, now if insight does not mature one will have to remain long at the stages of lower knowledges. However, no difficulty will confront the meditator as in the case of his contemplation for the lower path. It is possible that he may attain to one knowledge after another up to "knowledge of equanimity about formations" in a day's time. The mental process of knowledge is much more lucid, distinct and broad. Much keener are his experiences of fearfulness, misery, disgust, desire for deliverance from the ills of the mundane spheres. Formerly, although it was possible to attain fruition knowledge four or five times in an hour, now, if insight is not yet mature for the higher path, "knowledge of equanimity about formations" goes on. Possibly it may last from a day to months or years. On the maturity of insight, distinct noticings of the formations having appeared, the realization of the cessation of the formations comes with the attainment of the higher path and fruition. Then will come to him the "knowledge of reviewing." He will later return to the stage of "knowledge of arising and passing away" with a very clear mental process. This is the description of the progress of insight leading to the attainment of *sakadāgāmi magga*, the path of the once-returner.

Again, if one ardently wishes to attain to the third path, *anāgāmi magga*, one must again decide on a definite period during which one abandons fully the desire for returning to the fruition knowledge of the previous path. Then one resolves thus: "May only the progress of insight

relating to the higher path come. May I attain the higher path and fruition." And he must begin contemplating on body and mind as usual. He begins with "knowledge of arising and passing away," but soon he will attain the higher knowledges one after the other up to "knowledge of equanimity about formations." If insight is not yet mature, then that knowledge will linger on. When it matures, then it will reach the cessation of formations and with it the knowledge of the third path and fruition. This is the description of the attainment of the third path and fruition, of the *anāgāmi* or nonreturner.

One who aspires to the fourth and final path and fruition, that of sainthood *(arahatta magga* and *phala),* must fix a period and give up all desire to re-attain to the fruition-knowledge of the third path. Then he must begin to contemplate the bodily and mental processes as usual. This is the only way, as stated in the *Satipatthāna Sutra.* Beginning with "knowledge of arising and passing away," soon "knowledge of equanimity about formations" will be attained. If insight is not yet mature, it will tarry. When it does mature, then the meditator will attain to the cessation of formations with the realization of the final *arahatta magga.*

In the foregoing paragraphs, the words to the effect that the progress of insight will end up in the realization of the knowledge of the paths and fruitions *(magga-phala-nāna)* refer only to those who have gained maturity in the fulfilment of *pāramitas* (perfections). Those who have not yet developed *pāramitas* fully will come to a standstill at the "knowledge of equanimity about formations." An important point to be noted is that, although the person who has attained the first path is likely to attain the second path soon with comparative ease, he will find it difficult to reach the third path for a long time. The reason is that both of the attainers of the first path and the second path are well practiced in the observance of virtue *(sila)* or, in other words, they are the paragons of virtue. In the case of the attainer of the third path, he must have also fully developed concentration

(sāmadhi). Therefore, he is not able to attain the third path easily in that he has to strive hard to develop concentration. Be that as it may, without utmost effort to develop one's powers, nobody can possibly know whether he is able to attain this path or that path. In some cases, the attainment of a path comes only after a long time, and because one has to strive that long it must not be assumed that one has not yet fully developed *pāramitas*. Again, the present effort can lead to the fulfilment of *pāramitas*, getting nearer to maturity. So, one should not waste one's time by weighing in his mind the matter of one's having the *pāramitas* or not.

The meditator should bear in mind the following undeniable point and put forth utmost effort to achieve his aspiration.

Even the development of *pāramitas* is not possible without effort. Granted that one has fully developed *pāramitas*, he cannot possibly attain any path without effort. Such a person can attain a path easily and speedily if he puts forth effort. If he has developed *pāramitas* to an appreciable extent, his effort will lead to its maturity and consequently he can attain the path he aspires to. At the least, he has sown potent seeds for the harvest of a path in the next existence.

Advice

In these times those who are most ardent and keen to work for their own deliverance from the ills of the world and the attainment of *magga-phala-nirvana*, which is the highest goal of *vipassanā* (insight) meditation, they will be well advised to practice by the aforesaid way the contemplations of body, feeling, consciousness and mental objects, called otherwise *satipatthāna* meditation. It is, in fact, a "must" for them.

A Special Note

The technique of insight meditation outlined in this treatise is quite sufficient for persons of fair intelligence. Such persons, having read it, should practice these con-

templations with firm faith, keen desire and great diligence, in a methodical manner, and they can be sure of progress. It must, however, be pointed out that the details of the experiences and the progressive stages of insight gone through by meditators cannot possibly be described in full in this short treatise. There still remains much that is worthy of description. On the other hand, what has been described here is not experienced in toto by every meditator. There are bound to be differences according to one's capabilities and *pāramitas.* Again, one's faith, desire and diligence do not remain constant always. Furthermore, a meditator, having no instructor and being entirely dependent on book knowledge, will be as cautious and hesitant as a traveler who has never been on a particular journey. Therefore, it is obviously not very easy for such a person to attain the paths, fruitions and *nirvana (magga-phala-nirvana)* if he goes on striving without a teacher to guide and encourage him. This being so, one who is really keen to meditate until he attains his goal, *magga-phala-nirvana,* must find out a teacher who is fully qualified by his own attainments to guide him all along the way from the lowest stage of insight to the highest knowledges of path, fruition and reviewing. This advice is quite in accord with what is stated in the *Nidāna Vagga, Sumyutta Nikāya:* "A teacher should be sought for knowledge about decay and death as it really is." Should anybody be obsessed with pride—"I am an extraordinary man. Why should I learn from anyone?"—he will be well advised to do away with such pride, as Potthila Mahāthera did.

In the course of contemplation, bearing in mind the following advice of the Buddha, one should go all out to win the goal.

No slacker nor the man of puny strength
May win *nirvana,* freedom from all ill.
And this young brother, yea, this peerless man
Bears the last burden, Māra's conqueror.

(The Book of Kindred Sayings)

Notes

1. The eight *Uposatha* precepts are: abstention from (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) all sexual intercourse, (4) lying, (5) intoxicants, (6) partaking of solid food and certain liquids after twelve o'clock noon, (7) dance, song, music, shows (attendance and performance), the use of perfumes, ornaments, etc., and (8) luxurious beds.
2. There are four noble individuals *(ariya-puggala)*. They are those who have obtained a state of sanctity:
   a. The stream-winner *(sotāpanna)* is one who has become free from the first three of the ten fetters which bind him to the sensuous sphere, namely, personality belief, skeptical doubt, and attachment to mere rules and rituals.
   b. The once-returner *(sakadāgāmi)* has weakened the fourth and fifth of the ten fetters, sensuous craving and ill will.
   c. The nonreturner *(anāgāmi)* becomes fully free from the above-mentioned five lower fetters and is no longer reborn in the sensuous sphere before reaching *nirvana*.
   d. Through the path of holiness one further becomes free of the last five fetters: craving for fine material existence (in celestial worlds), craving for immaterial (purely mental) existence, conceit, restlessness, ignorance.
3. The thirty-two parts of the body, as used in body contemplation, are: head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, lymph, tears, serum, saliva, nasal mucus, synovial fluid, urine, brain.
4. Some of these points where the touch sensation may be observed are: where thigh and knee touch, or the hands placed together, or finger to finger, thumb to

thumb, closing of the eyelids, tongue inside the mouth, lips touching when mouth is closed.

5. *Taruna-udayabbaya-nāna.* On the degrees of insight knowledge, see *The Progress of Insight* by The Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw (publ. by The Forest Hermitage, Kandy, Ceylon).
6. The preceding section describes the "analytical knowledge of body and mind" *(nāmā-rupa-pariccheda-nāna)*, belonging to the "Purification of View."
7. The preceding section refers to "knowledge by discerning conditionality" *(paccaya-pariggaha-nāna)*, belonging to the "Purification by Overcoming Doubt."
8. The preceding paragraphs refer to the "knowledge of comprehension."
9. These phenomena are the "ten corruptions of insight." They have the character of "corruptions" only when they cause attachment in the meditator, or lead to conceit, i.e., if, in misjudging these phenomena and overrating his achievements, he believes to have attained to the paths of sainthood. These "corruptions" occur at the stage of "weak knowledge of rise and fall."
10. This refers to "purification by knowledge and wisdom of what is path and not-path."
11. Reference is here to the "final knowledge of rise and fall."
12. "Knowledge of dissolution."
13. "Knowledge of fearfulness."
14. "Knowledge of misery."
15. "Knowledge of disgust."
16. "Knowledge of desire for deliverance."
17. There are ten characteristics of impermanence, twenty-five of suffering and five of no-self.
18. This refers to "knowledge of re-observation (or reflection)."
19. At the suggestion of the Venerable Author, the following two references are here quoted, in explana-

tion of the stages in the realization of *nirvana*, on the paths of stream-entry, once-returning, etc.:

a. "'One who sees *nirvana*, which merges in the deathless (in the sense of the end) realizes it . . . .'

"The seeing of *nirvana*, at the moment of the first path is *realizing as seeing (dassana)*. At the other path moments it is *realizing as developing (bhāvanā)*."

b. ". . . Suppose a man who can see is traveling along a path on a cloudy night. The path is obscured by the darkness. Lightning flashes and dispels the dark. In the absence of darkness the path becomes clear. This happens on a second journey, and again on a third journey. Here, like the man who can see his setting out on the path, is the effort of insight put forth by the disciple for the stream-winning path. Like the obliteration of the way in darkness is the darkness covering the truths. Like the moment when the lightning flashes and dispels the darkness is the moment when the light of the stream-winning path arises and dispels the darkness covering the truths. Like the manifestation of the way when darkness clears is the time of the manifestations of the four truths to the stream-winning path; and what is manifest in the path is even manifest to the person who has got it. Like the second journey is the effort of insight to get the once-returning path. . . . Like the third journey is the effort of insight to get the never-returning path . . . ."

APPENDIX

Following is a concise excerpted translation from the Pali of the *Maha Satipatthana Sutra* accompanied by a commentary from the author, Mahasi Sayadaw. This is offered as an expanded aid in this meditational technique, a reference to the source from which all Satipatthana meditations arose, the words of the Buddha.

Techniques of Meditation

The *Mahā Satipatthāna Sutra* states:

- "And moreover, *bhikkhus* , a brother, when he is walking, is aware of it thus: 'I walk'; or when he is standing, or sitting, or lying down, he is aware thereof."
- "And moreover, *bhikkhus*, a brother, whether he departs, or returns, whether he looks at or looks away from, whether he has drawn in or stretched out (his limbs), whether he has donned underrobe, overrobe, or bowl, whether he is eating, drinking, chewing, savoring, or whether he is obeying the calls of nature—is aware of what he is about. In going, standing, sitting, sleeping, watching, talking, or keeping silence, he knows what he is doing."
- "And moreover, *bhikkhus*, a brother reflects upon this very body, however it be placed or disposed, with respect to its fundamentals [i.e., the four elements]."
- "Herein, O *bhikkhus*, is a brother when affected by a feeling of pleasure, aware of it, reflecting, 'I feel a pleasurable feeling.' So, too, is he aware when affected by a painful feeling."
  "Herein, O *bhikkhus*, a brother, if his thought be lustful, is aware that it is so, or his thought be free from lust, is aware that it is so."
- "Herein, O *bhikkhus*, a brother when within him is sensuous desire, is aware of it, reflecting, 'I

have within me sensuous desire.'"

In consonance with these teachings of the Buddha, it has been stated in colloquial language thus: "rising" while the abdomen is rising; "falling" while the abdomen is falling; "bending" while the limbs are bending; "stretching" while the limbs are stretching; "wandering" while the mind is wandering; "thinking, reflecting," or "knowing" while one is so engaged; "feeling stiff, hot," or "in pain" while one feels so; "walking, standing, sitting," or "lying" while one is so placed.

Here it should be noted that walking and so on are stated in common words instead of "being aware of the inner wind element manifesting itself in the movement of the limbs," as is stated in the Pali texts.

Rising and Falling Movement of the Abdomen

It is quite in agreement with the Buddha's teachings to contemplate on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Such rising and falling is a physical process *(rūpa)* caused by the pressure of the wind element. The wind element is comprised in the corporeality group of the five aspects of the physical and mental phenomena of existence *(khandha)*; in the tactile object of the twelve bases *(āyatana)*; in the body impression of the eighteen elements *(dhātu)*; in the wind element of the four material elements *(mahā-bhūta)*; in the truth of suffering of the four noble truths *(sacca)*; corporeality group, a tactile object, a body impression and truth of suffering are certainly objects for insight contemplation. Surely they are not otherwise. The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is therefore a proper object for contemplation, and while so contemplating, being aware that it is but a movement of the wind element, subject to the laws of impermanence, suffering and unsubstantiality, is quite in agreement with the Buddha's discourses on *khandhas*, *ayatanas*, *dhatus* and *saccas*.

While the abdomen is rising and falling the pressure and movement experienced thereby is a manifestation of the wind element which is tactile, and perceiving that

rightly as such is quite in consonance with what the Buddha taught as briefly shown below.

- "Do ye apply your mind thoroughly, brethren, to body and regard it in its true nature as impermanent."
- "Brethren, when a brother sees the body which is impermanent, as impermanent, this view of his is the right view."
- "Herein, O *bhikkhus*, a brother reflects: 'Such is material form, such is its genesis, such its passing away.'"
- "Do ye apply your minds thoroughly, brethren, to the tactile objects and regard their true nature as impermanent."
- "Brethren, when a brother sees tactile objects which are impermanent, this view of his is the right view."
- "But by fully knowing, by comprehending, by detaching himself from, by abandoning the tactile objects, one is capable of extinguishing ill."
- "In him that knows and sees tactile objects as impermanent, ignorance vanishes and knowledge arises."
- "Herein, O *bhikkhus*, a brother is aware of the organs of touch and tangibles."
- "Whatever is an internal element of motion, and whatever is an external element of motion, just these are the element of motion. By means of perfect intuitive wisdom it should be seen of this as it really is, thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self."

Thus it will be seen that the contemplation of the rising and the falling movement of the abdomen is in accord with the above discourses and also with the *Mahā-satipatthāna Sutra (Dhātumanasikāra Pabba*—Attention to Elements).

Again, the wind element that causes the movement and pressure of the abdomen, comprised in the corporeality group, is the truth of suffering.

- "And what, monks, is the truth about ill? Ill, it should be said, is the fivefold factor of grasping."
  "Monks, ill, as a truth, is to be fully understood."

Starting with Materiality

An insight meditator should start with materiality, which is more easily discernible than mentality.

- "But one whose vehicle is insight discerns the four elements."
- "And as regards those phenomena that are amenable to comprehension a beginning should be made by comprehending those among them that are obvious and easily discernible by the individual [meditator]."
- "Insight meditation begins with what is discernible. So a beginning should be made by comprehending those that are discernible. But later what is not easily discernible must somehow be made discernible and comprehended."

Depending also on the aforesaid commentarial and subcommentarial statements, instructions are given to the meditators to begin with the rising and falling movement of the abdomen with a view to facilitating their meditation. However, when concentration has been developed, contemplation should be made on whatever arises at all the six sense doors. Instructions to this effect are also given to the meditators. As instructed, the meditators can very well carry on with their contemplation. Therefore, no doubt should be entertained whether it will be sufficient to contemplate only on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen.

Contemplation on the Arising at the Six Sense Doors

Although contemplation must be made on whatever arises at all the sense doors, it must not be accompanied by thoughts about it. Only bare attention is to be paid to what arises at one or the other of the six sense doors.

- "He who for things he sees no passion breeds,
  But mindful, clear of head, can suffer sense,
  With uninflamed heart, nor staying clings."
- "He who for things he hears, or smells, or tastes,
  Or for things touched and felt no passion breeds,
  But mindful, clear of head, can suffer sense,
  With uninflamed heart, nor staying clings."

Contemplating on the rising and falling of the abdomen, one who knows its pressure and movement is "he who for things he felt no passion breeds, but mindful, clear of head, can suffer sense."

- "Brethren, the all is to be fully known. What all, brethren, is to be fully known? The eye, brethren, is to be fully known, visual objects are to be fully known, eye consciousness is to be fully known, eye contact is to be fully known, that weal or woe or neutral state experienced, which arises owing to eye contact—that also is to be fully known. Ear is to be fully known, sounds are to be fully known . . . nose . . . scent . . . tongue . . . savors . . . body is to be fully known, things tangible are to be fully known . . . mind is to be fully known, mind states are to be fully known. . . ."

In the above passage "fully known" means the awareness of the material and mental arisings at the six sense doors. The awareness of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen is comprised in "things tangible are to be fully known."

- "Brethren, the eye is to be comprehended, visual objects are to be comprehended, body is to be comprehended, things tangible are to be comprehended, mind is to be comprehended, mind states are to be comprehended."

Insight Meditations Without Prior Jhāna Development.

It is possible to begin straightaway with insight *(vipassanā)* meditation without having previously developed full concentration in knowledge *(jhana)* meditation.

- "Herein, some persons contemplate on the five aggregates of clinging as impermanent and so on without having previously developed tranquility. This contemplation is insight meditation."

This commentarial statement shows that it is possible to start with insight meditation without having striven to achieve access and full concentration. It has been stated that one whose vehicle is insight discerns four elements, which also goes to show this possibility. Besides, of the twenty-one parts of *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutra*, all except those dealing with mindfulness of breathing, the reflection on the repulsiveness of the body and the nine cemetery contemplations, show the manner of insight meditation, and so it is obvious that insight meditation is possible thereby. However, as the Commentary observes that these parts deal with access concentration contemplations, it should be understood that access concentration is developed while contemplating on the postures of the body and so on and, having overcome the five hindrances, purity of mind is attained. Therefore, of the said parts, *Visuddhimagga* treats the reflection of the material elements concerned with insight meditation, under the heading of a meditation subject called "discerning the elements" *(dhātu-vavatthāna)* and points out that, while contemplating the four elements, the hindrances are overcome and access concentration is attained. On the strength of this commentarial statement, it should be borne in mind with confidence and firmness that while contemplating on either all the four or on one, two or three of the four, access concentration can be developed, the hindrances overcome and purity of mind attained. It is the personal experience of those who practice meditation ardently.

Attainment of Purity of Mind by Access Concentration

- "Purity of mind is the twofold concentration of the accessory and the ecstatic stage."
- "The purification of consciousness, namely, the eight attainments, together with access concen-

tration. . . ."

- "Access concentration being like full concentration, the base of insight meditation is as well purity of mind. That is why the commentator states 'together with access concentration.'"
- "When ordinary people and trainers develop it, thinking, 'After emerging from one of the eight meditative attainments we shall exercise insight with concentrated consciousness,' the development of absorption concentration provides them with the benefit of insight by serving as the proximate cause of insight, and so too does access concentration as method of arriving at wide open (conditions) in crowded (circumstances."
- "As a method of arriving at 'wide open' means as a method of getting an opportunity, the ninth opportunity (the lifetime of the Buddha) for the benefit (of attainment of the path, fruition and *nirvana).* To elaborate: as it is very difficult to come across the dispensation of a buddha, a person, terror-stricken, is so very eager to gain deliverance from *samsāra* that he, without awaiting the attainment of full concentration, begins insight meditation, basing it only on access concentration."

These two passages show most clearly that purity of mind can be attained also by access concentration, and insight meditation is possible thereby.

- "The five grasping groups . . . are the conditions which should be pondered with method by a virtuous brother, as being impermanent, suffering, sick, as an impostor, as a dart, as pain, as ill health, as alien, as transitory, empty and soulless.

  "By a brother who is a stream-winner . . . it is the same five groups of grasping that should be so pondered.

  "By one who is a once-returner . . . so pon-

dered.

"By one who is a nonreturner . . . so pondered.

"Indeed, friend, it is possible for a virtuous brother so pondering with method these five groups of grasping to realize the fruits of stream-winning; for a brother who is a stream-winner . . . to realize the fruits of once-returning: for a brother who is a once-returner . . . to realize the fruits of nonreturning; and for a brother who is a nonreturner . . . to realize the fruits of *arahat*-ship."

This discourse on virtue shows clearly that one who is virtuous can ponder the five grasping groups and, by so pondering, realize, by stages, the fruits of stream-winning, once-returning, nonreturning and *arahat*ship. The rising and falling movement of the abdomen is the wind element comprised in the corporeality group. So it should be borne in mind steadfastly that the technique of meditation based on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen and the contemplation of five grasping groups that arise at the six sense doors is proper and right, leading up to the realization of the fruits of *arahat*ship.

In conclusion, special attention may be drawn to the fact that it is quite proper to contemplate on whatever is of material nature in any part of the body, and that it is equally proper to contemplate on whatever is of wind element in any part of the body.

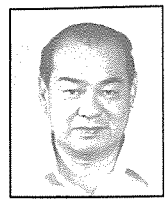
Bhaddanta Sobhana,
Agga Maha Pandita,
Mahasi Sayadaw

October 10, 1970

SABBA DANAM DHAMMA DANAM JINATI
The Gift of Truth excels all other Gifts

Transference of Merits

Ng Kah Noi
Born : 13 July 1932
Departed : 11 Sept 2003



Lim Kow Hock
Born : 26 Feb 1925
Departed : 27 April 1992

May the merits gained
by this gift of Dhamma accrue
to our late Mother and Father
May they attain everlasting happiness,
Supreme Bliss of Nibbana

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